



Room tax could collect additional **\$600K** from short-term rentals

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

The town has received about \$200,000 from the municipal accommodation tax since last July, a

fraction of what it could be collecting if the same tax was levied on all short-term rentals.

Currently, the town collects the two per cent tax from all businesses providing five rooms or

more. Those with less than five rooms are exempt from the tax.

“Staff estimates that an additional \$600,000 may be received” if the tax is collected from all operators, town

spokesperson Marah Minor said in an email.

However, since the town’s bylaws define a bed and breakfast as a “single-detached dwelling with no more than three guest bedrooms,” most of them

are exempt from charging the room tax.

Cottage rentals are defined by the same three-room criteria and are also exempt from the tax.

The town’s bylaw defines vacation apartments as one-

bedroom units rented out to vacationers and are exempt from the room tax.

Research by The Lake Report in 2021 showed that of 255 short-term rentals,

Continued on Page 11

Parliament Oak features should be **preserved**, says heritage committee

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Two Sisters Resorts Corp. wants to demolish the old Parliament Oak school to make way for a hotel and the town’s heritage committee wants the developer to first protect some of the site’s heritage features.

The former school is on the town’s register of heritage properties but it does not have heritage designation and is not protected by the Ontario Heritage Act.

“We are amenable to a number of the recommendations provided by staff,” said Christian Giansante, a Stantec heritage planner working with Two Sisters.

The intent to demolish was submitted by Two Sisters on Feb. 10 and was brought to the municipal heritage committee April 5.

Staff recommended in a report signed by heritage planner Denise Horne that the heritage committee acknowledge the notice with

Continued on Page 11

Activist ends **brief** hunger strike



James Russell spent Monday night chained to the plaque at the Niagara Baptist Church Burial Ground. SOMER SLOBODIAN

Somer Slobodian | Local Journalism Initiative | The Lake Report

Activist James Russell abruptly ended his hunger strike at the Niagara Baptist Church Burial Ground after just one day despite town council not meeting his demands.

But he says he is planning a large “peaceful but loud” protest on June 17 that will start at the burial ground, march down Mississagua Street and finish along Queen Street.

His goal is to force the town to

uncover and restore long-buried gravestones at the cemetery.

He left NOTL before 6 p.m. on Tuesday citing family concerns back home in Toronto and wasn’t able to watch the council’s evening committee meeting live.

“I did hear that I failed,” he said Wednesday, noting Coun. Maria Mavridis, who backs his efforts, had hoped to have council pass a motion supporting his cause.

Continued on Page 5

NOTL hockey player hoping to be **drafted to OHL**

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

It’s been a remarkable year for Niagara-on-the-Lake hockey player Kaleb Dietsch.

The 6-foot-2 defence-

man earned an invitation to Team Ontario’s tryout camp last fall, was runner-up with his team in a hard-fought Ontario Minor Hockey Association championship final and competed with some of the top AAA teams

in the prestigious OHL Cup showcase tourney two weeks ago.

And this weekend in Oshawa he’ll get to show his stuff at the OHL under-16 combine, where general managers and scouts will

be eyeing players for next week’s junior draft.

Dietsch is one of just 24 defencemen invited to the combine, where players’ skills on and off the ice are scrutinized.

Yes, it’s been a memorable

year and it’s not over yet.

Just turned 16, Dietsch spent this season competing with Niagara’s Southern Tier Admirals AAA team – playing minor hockey at its

Continued on Page 15



Kaleb Dietsch.

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ANALYSIS

Council *responses* to questions about relationships

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

In the aftermath of a controversial incident in which a developer gave a town councillor an envelope containing \$10,000 in cash, The Lake Report posed a detailed series of questions to all members of Niagara-on-the-Lake council and regional Coun. Andrea Kaiser about their relationships and interactions with people and companies.

Under normal circumstances, such questions might be considered extremely intrusive, but given that councillors are elected to represent the public – and in the interests of accountability and transparency – we felt the questions were valid and fair.

On March 25, we sent the questions to all NOTL's elected municipal officials and asked for responses by March 31.

After some discussion among town councillors and the mayor, they decided Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa would respond on behalf of all council members, but that individual councillors were free to submit their own comments if they wished.

Some councillors opted to answer and some did not. In most instances, the responses were very general and many did not

answer the specific questions posed.

Immediately after receiving the mayor's response on behalf of council on March 30, we thanked him for his submission but advised that it didn't deal with the specifics of the questions. No further response was received from him.

Here are the questions we asked of council members:

1. Do you have a personal, private or business

relationship with anyone or any company that has or may have business before the Town of NOTL? Please provide details, briefly.

2. Have you ever met privately with any person (including developers) having business with the Town of NOTL, discussed town matters with them in a venue other than a council or committee meeting? Who and why?

3. In your time as a coun-

cillor, have you ever declared a conflict of interest due to a personal, business or professional relationship you have with anyone or any company that has or may have business before the Town of NOTL? Please provide details, briefly.

4. Is there anything else that residents of NOTL should know about any of your interactions or relationships in your capacity as an elected member of council?



Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa.



Deputy Mayor Erwin Wiens.



Tim Balasiuk.



Gary Burroughs.



Wendy Cheropita.



Maria Mavridis.



Sandra O'Connor.



Nick Ruller.



Adriana Vizzari.

With the mayor responding to our questions on behalf of council, regional Coun. Andrea Kaiser and town Coun. Tim Balasiuk didn't submit responses. Coun. Wendy Cheropita said she was content with the mayor's response. Coun. Maria Mavridis posted comments on her public blog and we have included the relevant information below.

As well, information about gifts and other benefits accepted by councillors is posted under "Disclosures and Conflict of Interest" on the town's website.

Here are the answers received to our questions.

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa

Thank you for the role local media such as The Lake Report has in our community. The benefits of a local, diligent, well-resourced news media are strongly supported.

As lord mayor, I have chosen to respond on behalf of members of council. Should members of council wish to respond individually that is up to their discretion.

Members of council are residents and elected officials of Niagara-on-the-Lake, representing over 18,000 people. As members of the community, we have many relationships and a broad range of interactions with many residents, businesses, and community organizations.

As lord mayor, I meet with all of the above regularly regarding matters of public interest. This was true for my schedule while I was both a town and regional councillor. I expect that most members of council would share a similar experience.

Each member of council has a personal obligation to ensure that they act in compliance with all laws, the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act and the code of conduct. We take this responsibility very seriously.

I have declared a conflict in several matters over my 10-plus years as an elected council member.

I will not review or list those individual occurrences, as they are a matter of

public record and available for any person to review. This fact would be the same for members of council as well.

Obviously, there will be variations amongst council members depending on duration of their terms.

Coun. Erwin Wiens Deputy lord mayor

Members of council are residents and elected officials of Niagara-on-the-Lake, a town of over 18,000 people.

Growing up in Niagara-on-the-Lake, raising a family, being a second-generation farmer, volunteering with many organizations and a council member, it is expected that I, like my colleagues, would have many

relationships and a broad range of interactions with many residents, organizations and businesses in the community.

Each member of council has a personal obligation to ensure that they act in compliance with all laws, the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act and the code of conduct.

As a councillor, I take this responsibility seriously. All declared conflicts are a matter of public record and available for review.

Coun. Gary Burroughs

I did meet with a developer on March 4, (not March 11), at his request at Two Sisters. That meeting is currently under review by Niagara Regional Police so

no further comment.

In general, I am happy to meet with any resident at their request to discuss issues they have. Typically, we either meet at Tim Hortons or the NOTL Community Centre. I buy my own coffee. These meetings usually take up to an hour. Rarely is anyone else in attendance.

I have been involved with many groups over the years, as far back as chairing the Shaw Festival in 1982-83, and the Niagara Foundation where I was a board member for 25 years.

I do try to attend the foundation's cocktail parties each year and I always pay my own way.

Continued on Page 3



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ANALYSIS

Mayor answers on council's behalf

Continued from Page 2

Typically, over the years, very few developers have requested to have a meeting outside our regular committee structure.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita

I assume that by now you have received the lord mayor's response to your request.

As stated in the letter, the lord mayor has responded to you on behalf of council. I am fully supportive of the lord mayor's response.

Coun. Maria Mavridis

This is an excerpt from her public blog:
When you put your name in to run for a seat in the municipality, you know that, should you be elected, you will make decisions that directly affect the daily lives of residents, families, local business and the community as a whole.

The key principles are integrity, accountability, respect, leadership and collaboration.

In return, you would expect the same from your constituents.

Representing a small town, you are well aware that being on town council means that:

*You will be out for dinner locally with friends or family and may be approached by a resident who has concerns, and your dinner will be interrupted for a few brief minutes.

*While at your daughter's volleyball game, you will be approached by some other parents with their concerns and you will take the time to listen.

*Every week you will commit a few evenings for council meetings and prep.

What you aren't aware of or expecting at the time you throw your name in is:

*The disrespectful emails you will receive because you didn't vote the way one person wanted.

*Negative confrontation, while standing at the local coffee shop in line with your family.

*Local media demanding



Town councillors at their inaugural meeting in November 2022. FILE

your autobiography.

*People showing up at your place of business and verbally attacking your family members.

*Being questioned on your intelligence.

*Your daughter coming home from school and saying a kid told her that her mother is in people's pockets because that's what they heard their parents say.

That is not OK.

When I ran for council, I promised to be honest, transparent and communicate with all.

Recently, The Lake Report sent a blanket email to all of council:

I did not respond to the email. Why, you ask?

The Lake Report along with other local papers have always been able to contact me directly for a phone interview, coffee interview, or to ask me to advertise for a local initiative.

After the blanket email, our mayor told us he would respond on behalf of all of council, so I respected that.

Had I responded, this would have been my response;

In my short time as a councillor, I have met with the following, in the presence of other council members to view presentations: Rainer Hummel, Peller Limited and many residents.

This is part of our job.

I have not declared conflict on anything, as I have not had any conflict to date.

My first week as an elected official, I contacted the integrity commissioner with all the details of my personal business and received clearance letters on all.

The one item that will come before council is 343 York Rd. and I will declare

conflict on that specific location as it is my father's land.

When you live, work, and breathe in the town you represent, and are an engaged member of the community for over 30 years, as I have been, of course you will be questioned. I promised to be transparent and honest. I have and will continue to do so.

I just ask that it be done with the same integrity and respect that is expected from me.

Coun. Sandra O'Connor

The lord mayor has responded on behalf of council as a whole and I will add some personal comments. I understand that you are giving us a platform for transparency, accountability and openness.

I do not have a personal, private or business relationship with anyone or any company that has business before the Town of NOTL. I cannot speculate on the future.

I have never personally met with any developer or their representative outside of official town meetings regarding town business.

I have never been in a position to declare conflict of interest.

Coun. Nick Ruller

I have answered your questions to the best of my ability below.

1. I don't. However, as you can appreciate, I also don't claim to be aware of every detail of the personal lives of those that I have a "personal" relationship with. Consequently, this answer is to the best of my knowledge.

2. Yes, I have interacted with many individuals over the past several months,

making it unreasonable to list all situations. These situations have included flooding concerns, short-term rental concerns, future development application concerns and general meet/greets, etc. My role as a town councillor is to be a representative, policy-maker, and steward. This is achieved through meaningful dialogue with constituents in order to ensure decisions are in the community's best interests. With that being said, all interactions were in compliance with the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act and town council's code of conduct.

3. No.

4. No.

Coun. Adriana Vizzari

I have never been in any such situation and have nothing to disclose in response to the questions asked.

In fact, the notion of such meetings has concerned me since I started in my role on council. To ease this concern, and in an attempt to create an equitable process and more transparency in circumstances where a party – developer or otherwise – wants to meet with council to discuss town matters, I brought forward a motion on Dec. 20, 2022.

The motion sought to eliminate private meetings and proposed that these meetings only take place during council or committee meetings, all of which are part of public record.

The motion led to a lengthy staff report outlining the law in this area and several recommendations were made. I encourage residents, especially those looking to meet with council, to read through it.

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Left: A Wellington Bomber, similar to the one Jack Hutchison was trained to fly. IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

Right: Hutchison during training in Canada. CANADA'S VIRTUAL WAR MEMORIAL

THE MONUMENTS MEN

Virgil's Jack Hutchison shot down by German fighters

It's been a century since Niagara-on-the-Lake's iconic clock tower cenotaph was erected. Then, in 1926, the Township of Niagara unveiled its own memorial in Queenston. In recognition of those who fought and died in two world wars and beyond, NOTL historian Ron Dale has been researching the stories of the people – all men – whose names are engraved on the two cenotaphs. This is one in a series of stories documenting and remembering the sacrifices of those commemorated on the municipal memorial in Queenston.

Ron Dale
Special to The Lake Report

Jack Hutchison of Virgil was meant to be a fruit farmer in Niagara but the Second World War ended that ambition.

He was born at the Cottage Hospital in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Jan. 6, 1917, to Lawrence Leon Hutchison and Florence Victoria Pendergast.

Florence and Lawrence were married in St. Davids, the bride's hometown, in 1912. The couple had two sons, Jack and his brother James, who had been born in 1915.

Lawrence died on Oct. 4, 1921, at the NOTL Cottage Hospital of a perforated ulcer at the young age of 34. Florence never remar-

ried, raising the boys with the help of family members living in Niagara.

The boys attended Virgil Public School and the high school in Niagara-on-the-Lake, now part of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum.

After graduation he worked on the farm of his uncle, Howard Lowrie Craise, who was married to Ethel Hutchison, sister of Lawrence. Howard and Ethel had daughters but no sons and Howard stated in a letter that he expected Jack to eventually assume management of his farm.

Jack was an active man and enjoyed playing hockey, softball, tennis and badminton.

With the Second World War raging, he decided to enlist in the Royal Canadian Air Force and applied to become a pilot on July 22, 1940. His application was eventually accepted and he was ordered to report to the number 1 Manning Depot in Toronto on Dec. 11.

On Jan. 5, 1941, Jack was sent to the Air Navigation School in Port Albert on the shores of Lake Huron, north of Goderich.

After completing ground school training in Port Albert, he was sent to the Initial Training School in Toronto on March 30. On May 5, he reported to the Elementary Flying Training School in London and,

finally, to the Service Flying Training School in Brantford between June 22 and Sept. 2, 1941.

He was trained to fly multi-engine bombers. Now a flight sergeant, he received his pilot's wings on Sept. 1 and was ready to be sent to war.

The day after completing his training Hutchison was sent to Halifax to await transport to Britain, finally sailing on Sept. 18. Once there, Hutchison was briefly stationed at the RAF Personnel Reception Centre.

On Oct. 6 he was "taken on strength" by number 20 Operational Training Unit in Lossiemouth, Moray, in northeast Scotland to train on the planes used by the Royal Air Force Bomber Command.

Now fully trained, Hutchison was assigned to 115 Squadron of the Royal Air Force on March 25, 1942. Seven weeks later he was dead.

In 1942, Bomber Command was ramping up a strategic bombing campaign targeting German factories, rail depots, dockyards, bridges, dams and cities. They mostly bombed at night to deter interception by German fighter aircraft.

To counter these raids, the Germans protected vulnerable points with arrays of searchlights and anti-aircraft artillery. They also formed "night fighter" squadrons, mostly flying JU

88 and ME 110 dual-engine aircraft.

These fighters would be "scrambled" when a stream of bombers was detected. Once they got close to the bombers it was easier to see them at night due to the flames from their exhausts.

Coming up behind and just below the Allied bombers, the night fighters would rake them with cannon fire, destroying or damaging a great number.

Hutchison was the pilot of a Wellington 3 bomber, which held a crew of five. While he was an RCAF pilot, he was flying for the RAF. His other four crew members were all RAF sergeants.

During an operation to bomb a submarine factory in Bremen, Germany, on the night of June 4, 1942, Hutchison's Wellington bomber was one of 170 planes sent out.

His bomber was shot down by a German night fighter just off Vieland on the return from Bremen. Jack's plane crashed into the North Sea and all five crewmen were killed.

Hutchison's body was recovered and buried in the Den Burg Cemetery near Texel in the Netherlands. The bodies of his crew were never found.

He is commemorated on the Queenston cenotaph and on the memorial wall at the Bomber Command Museum in Nanton, Alta.

Interpretive board will mark old railway path into NOTL dock area

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

People in Old Town may soon get the chance to learn a little more about the history of the Canadian railroad in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Paul Chapman, treasurer for the Niagara chapter of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association, received approval from town council to erect an interpretive board in the dock area next to the old railway tracks.

"Our mission is to document and to bring forward indications of the railroad history in Niagara and its impacts," said Chapman.

He shared a rough layout of the board which shows the dock area used to be home to a small, bustling train station.

The board has four photos, including one of the old bridge the trains used to cross into the dock area on their way to the station.

Another shows the old Michigan Central Train Station where passengers could catch trains all the way to Toronto.

The draft also has a photo of what Chapman described as a "10-wheeler steam locomotive."

About three times a day, "these trains ran between Niagara-on-the-Lake all the way to Fort Erie," Chapman said.

The fourth image in the draft shows the railway route as mapped in 1876.

Chapman said the last photo was a "work in progress" and that they might choose to highlight the train route on the photo for the final version.

"Pictures say a thousand words," Chapman said. "People get a better feel for history when they can see a picture of what it looked like."

In 1854, the Erie and Ontario railroad was the third one of its kind in Ontario. It ran from Chippawa to Niagara-on-the-Lake. In 1863, it was extended to Fort Erie.

The trains brought produce as much as passengers to the dockside junction, the interpretive board says.

Workers would load much of the produce onto Toronto-bound ships, which would unload them to vendors across the lake.

Chapman thinks the eight by nine metre board should be placed on Delater Street at the start of the beach side foot path, where there used to be a bridge for the trains to cross into the dock area.

The location of the sign has already been identified in the town's dock area master plan, he told council.

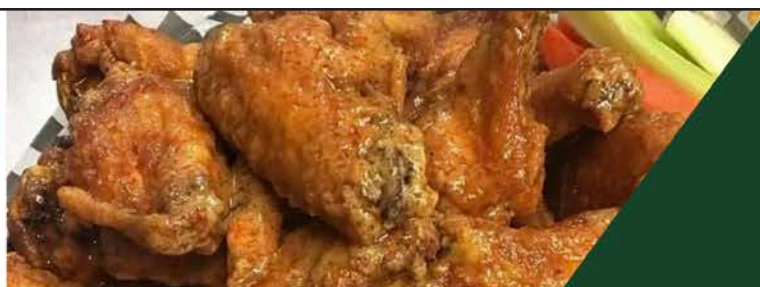
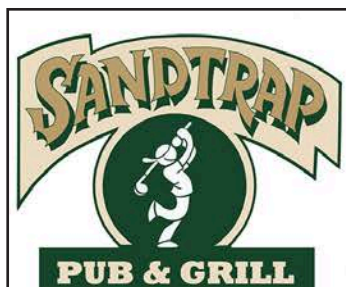
"Railroads and railway history have been a lifelong interest of mine," he said in an interview afterward.

He still remembers the bridge used by the trains to get to the station.

The line was last used in 1959 and the tracks were taken out in 1962, he said.



Paul Chapman is ready to install an interpretive board to teach people about the Canadian railroads. EVAN LOREE



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Protester ends **hunger strike** early

Continued from Front Page

He called the decision “disgraceful” especially since he felt his brief hunger strike received a lot of support from people.

Mavridis said she would have needed a two-thirds majority vote for the motion to pass.

“I would not have gotten the support if I brought a motion,” she said.

She was also informed by chief administrator Marnie Cluckie that the town needs to go through the Bereavement Authority of Ontario before doing work on the cemetery, something she wasn’t aware of, she said.

Russell emailed Mavridis thanking her for her support and she told him she’ll stay on top of it.

Cluckie told The Lake Report on Tuesday morning that Russell and the town both have the same objectives.

But Russell contends he and the town are nowhere “near each other in terms of goals.”

At Tuesday night’s meeting, Mavridis requested a “clear update” from Cluckie, who outlined the entire process beginning with the time Russell came before council in March 2022.

At that time he asked the town to assist in locating the graves at the burial ground and offered to pay for a ground penetrating radar search to see how many graves there are.

She described how the town staff worked hard with Russell to ensure the proper steps were taken.

Cluckie wrapped up by discussing the project’s status with the Friends of the Forgotten, an independent citizen committee working to create a memorial landscape at the burial ground.

She also said the results of a stage one archeological assessment will be ready soon.

Council took no action Tuesday and will wait for the results.

Russell, 76, chained himself to the plaque at the burial ground at noon on Monday and invited media to witness his protest.

He locked a 10-pound gold chain to his wrist and secured it to the plaque.



The town’s chief administrative officer, Marnie Cluckie, centre, makes a morning stop to check in on protester James Russell on Tuesday.. SOMER SLOBODIAN

“It’s the heaviest chain I could buy on Amazon,” he said.

He said he hoped that, by staging the hunger strike, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake would agree to unearth and restore headstones he believes are buried at the historic Black cemetery.

“I want the town to do the right thing, to restore the names to the folks, to the Black Canadian settlers who are buried here,” he said.

Russell is well-known for his restoration efforts at the burial ground, on Mississauga Street near Mary Street.

He’s been advocating to unearth the headstones since 2022, when the town allowed him to search the site using ground penetrating radar.

That search showed there could be 28 graves and 19 buried headstones on the property.

Russell estimated it would cost about \$59,000 to unearth and restore the headstones.

“My end goal is to restore respect to the folks and convince the town to allocate the \$59,000 and do the right thing, for God’s sakes,” he said Wednesday morning.

When he launched his protest Monday, Russell said he planned to sit on the property around the clock, with no food, until Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and the town agreed to his demands.

On Monday night, Russell said he slept in his chair and used blankets to keep him-

self warm. He said he saw four skunks on the property overnight.

He was joined by resident Yvonne Bredow, who led a Black Lives Matter rally through NOTL in 2020. She spent the night there.

Russell claims the town purposefully buried headstones in the past and that it’s the town’s responsibility to unearth and cover the costs of restoring them. The town denies intentionally burying the stone markers.

Bredow said the town should “do their due diligence and find the money” to restore the headstones, without using tax dollars.

Zalepa told The Lake Report the town has been successful in the past when it came to privately funded projects, like the ordnance boundary stone restoration project.

“We’re a little community” without the resources of a big municipality, he said.

Zalepa showed up Monday evening after hearing Russell was requesting to speak with him personally.

Russell said the mayor stayed for about 45 minutes and said what he’s asking for is not in the budget.

“There are no funds in the town’s operating budget to maintain the old cemeteries that we have,” Zalepa told The Lake Report.

He said the town is working with the Friends of the Forgotten committee to raise money for the burial ground’s restoration.

“We feel long term that that’s the path forward,” said Zalepa.

Cluckie said the town doesn’t yet know what the cost will be.

Earlier on Monday, Kevin Turcotte, the town’s manager of parks and recreation, visited and spoke with Russell.

Turcotte took some notes and told him he’d pass the information along to his supervisor, said Russell.

Many people visited him Monday, some bringing him drinks and blankets to help get him through the night.

Former lord mayor Betty Disero stopped by late Monday night to make sure he had a flashlight.

All he brought with him is a duffel bag filled with foil blankets and portable phone chargers, two large water bottles and a book.

To pass the time, he planned to read “To Have and Have Not,” by Ernest Hemingway.

Asked if he was scared, he alluded to those buried on the property. “These folks were scared and I owe it to them.”

On Monday, George Webber, head of the Friends of the Forgotten committee, watched Russell from the sidewalk as he started his protest.

“I think he’s refusing to understand the dynamics involved. I mean, this is a process,” Webber told The Lake Report.

“The town’s not in a position to make any decisions on what he is requesting. He knows that. But he’s leaving that out,” he said.

The town needs to go with the Bereavement Authority of Ontario and other bodies before any work can be done at the site, said Cluckie.

Webber is worried the protest will confuse the community, but wants to be clear that Russell has not been part of the Friends of the Forgotten since October.

Russell said he doesn’t plan to stop with the Niagara Baptist Church Burial Ground.

Other sites where he believes Black settlers are buried, like 240 Centre St. and McNab Cemetery, are still on his radar, and he says both are a “work in progress.”



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Contributed by Patty Garriock
 “Adopt the pace of nature.
 Her secret is patience.”
 - Ralph Waldo Emerson

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Go tell it on the Parkway



A crowd gathers every year at the Living Waters Wayside Chapel on the Niagara Parkway for an Easter sunrise service. This year about 50 people were in attendance. DAVE VAN DE LAAR



Editorial

Accessibility for all in downtown NOTL

Kevin MacLean
 Managing Editor

When you're able-bodied, whether young or older, almost nothing can stand in your way. Literally.

However, not everyone is so lucky and that doesn't mean they effectively should be shut out of places, destinations, businesses, attractions that everyone else has ready access to.

In fact, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (commonly referred to as AODA) seeks to make sure that we all have equal access to our communities.

Whether you use a cane, a walker, a scooter, a wheelchair, have mobility challenges or other concerns, you should be able to get where you want to go.

And that is why when Pamela TurnerSmith spoke

to us about the problems she has documented accessing stores and buildings in downtown Niagara-on-the-Lake – in the heart of the tourist and historical district – we featured the story prominently on our front page on March 30.

TurnerSmith summarized the situation succinctly and in just seven words: “A single step is a closed door.” The reality behind that statement should be an embarrassment to us all.

If you have never given this issue a thought previously, please stop and think about those seven words. And the fact that one little step, only a few inches high, can shut out a large sector of our population.

This is something that should concern us all as NOTL residents, as business people, as human beings.

It's just not right.

Obviously in a historic town like ours, with many buildings that date back more than a century, accessibility is bound to be a problem.

Fortunately, the Town of NOTL, our elected community leaders, the Chamber of Commerce and individual businesses all recognize and agree that the situation is untenable and needs to be addressed.

Kudos to TurnerSmith for coming forward and advocating on behalf of herself and many others – but not just complaining about it, as so many of us often do, but offering a reasonable, affordable and readily available solution.

And it's portable.

The StopGap Foundation's ramps have been immensely successful elsewhere – notably in Toronto

– and it seems there is no reason they could not work in most inaccessible spots in NOTL.

The cost is estimated to be about \$15,000 – and even if it works out to be double or triple that, it is still an affordable alternative.

So, where do we go from here?

Everyone seems to agree that “something” needs to be done. That's a good start. But we, as a society will be, and should be, judged by how we look after the more vulnerable among us.

To the town, the Chamber, businesses in Old Town (and elsewhere across NOTL), we say: Let's get this done. Now. Fix it. Without delay.

Because it is the right thing to do.
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Tribunal should **decide fate** of Rand Estate

Judy McLeod
Special to The Lake Report



Solmar and SORE will get another chance to argue over the future of the Rand Estate April 24. EVAN LOREE

Niagara-on-the-Lake council has less than 90 days to make a decision on a number of applications by the Marotta group for permits under the Heritage Act to demolish or alter most of the remaining heritage attributes on the back half of the Rand Estate.

Should council, with input from the town's municipal heritage committee, fail to make a decision in that time, the permits will be deemed to be approved.

Should council deny those permit applications, that decision will then certainly be appealed by the Marotta group to the Ontario Land Tribunal and joined with the Planning Act applications already in front of the tribunal to allow the proposed subdivision to proceed.

Those applications are scheduled for a hearing next spring. The town and SORE are parties to that hearing.

Therefore, the only logical and appropriate decision for council is to deny all of the Heritage Act permit applications.

It is critically important to remember that the question of whether this subdivision will be approved in its

current or an amended form has already been taken away from council and given to the Ontario Land Tribunal.

The Marotta companies made that decision by filing appeals with the tribunal some time ago. Our elected council was not given the opportunity of making a decision itself first.

The tribunal hearing will involve extensive expert evidence and cross-examination of those experts.

The proceeding will find facts based on the evidence and determine which expert opinions should be given the most weight. The tribunal now stands in the shoes of council and has been given the responsibility of making the decision on what, if anything, of the

Marotta subdivision proposal should be approved.

Surely the Ontario Land Tribunal is therefore the appropriate place for a final decision on every aspect of the Marotta proposal, including the Heritage Act permit applications to allow the subdivision that were filed much later by the Marotta group and only deemed complete by the town recently.

Council is simply not, in my view, in a position to usurp the role of the tribunal here and make informed decisions on Heritage Act permits integral to the outcome of next spring's tribunal hearing based on an hour and a half of submissions on April 24 from the Marotta companies, SORE and the town's advisers.

Town heritage planner Denise Horne's recent report recommended denying almost all of Marotta's Heritage Act permit applications for the Rand subdivision.

The fact that Horne's report is some 850 pages long illustrates my point.

Who on council (or the municipal heritage committee) will be able to wade through that 850 page report and make an informed decision about all of the facts and expert opinions presented therein?

Developer Benny Marotta has chosen to make the tribunal the decision-maker on whether his subdivision proposal proceeds or not.

On April 24, council should simply deny all of the Heritage Act permits requested by the Marotta companies. That will then be appealed up to the tribunal and joined with the Planning Act applications already there at Mr. Marotta's request.

The tribunal can then make an informed decision on all aspects of this proposal, including the Heritage Act permits, based on a fulsome examination of expert evidence tested by cross-examination.

Judy McLeod is a spokesperson for Save Our Rand Estate (SORE).

Concerns about **cyclists** on the roads of NOTL

Dear editor:

Although I agree that something needs to be done in Queenston to curb drivers who are not considerate of the mostly narrower roads, these roads also being uneven, etc., I think there also is a much bigger problem with cyclists.

It appears Louise Leyland might have been walking into the sun heading west on that Sunday afternoon when she was struck and killed.

There is absolutely no reason why the cyclist could not have seen her as the cyclist was heading south.

I wonder if this cyclist was riding head down in the general racing position of many cyclists. Now right there is the problem. This racing position is common along the Niagara Parkway as well as the side roads leading to the Parkway.

We are constantly aware of this as we head out of our driveway. Some of

these cyclists actually give a light wave as they speed past while I wait, but many do not acknowledge my presence as I wait for them, as they might not even have noticed me.

They are often also seen not stopping at stop signs either. If the cyclist who struck Louise Leyland was indeed travelling in a racing position than I see a strong possibility that charges should be laid.

If he was not in a racing position, then there is also a real problem as to why this happened.

It has nothing to do with the road conditions and the speed of vehicles, even though I agree a solution needs to be implemented for this quaint, yet important little village.

Rest in peace, Louise and to the cyclist, accident or not, it's a hard lesson.

*Susan Pohorly
NOTL*

Act now to make NOTL shops **accessible to all**

This letter was sent to members of NOTL council and a copy was submitted to The Lake Report for publication.

We have been regular visitors of your lovely town for the past 30 years and have always enjoyed what you have to offer with respect to arts, theatre, shopping and culinary experiences.

We read the March 30 article in The Lake Report ("A single step is a closed door"), about the issue of accessibility to your commercial establishments highlighted by the experiences of Pamela Turner Smith.

It is indeed a shock to learn that 60 per cent of your establishments are inaccessible.

We wholeheartedly

endorse the views expressed in the article about the need for ramps to address this situation, a solution that does not seem out of reach for a town like yours.

Niagara-on-the-Lake is a magnet for tourists from far and near, and given the numbers cited in the story it makes sense to address the accessibility issue for those with mobility challenges.

Not only to become an inclusive and welcoming town for all, but also because it makes good economic sense not to exclude any potential visitors or shoppers.

We hope you will take action soon. There is time for you to address this for the coming summer season.

*Jenny Gonzalez
Ralph Horne
Oakville*



Ramps are an easy, **inexpensive** solution

Dear editor:

Regarding the March 30 article on accessibility to stores and buildings in Niagara-on-the-Lake ("A single step is a closed door"), this is an issue that has been overlooked for far too long.

And it is also very clear that the ramp solution offered with StopGap is relatively inexpensive.

Furthermore, the StopGap ramps are also something

that could be accomplished in time for the arrival of a new tourist season, but more importantly, would be an enormous aid to many residents who live in NOTL.

It is time for this new council to "step" up and be the change for many residents who have had access denied when there is and inexpensive solution so easily at hand.

*Susan Dewar
NOTL*

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Real-life examples of ‘sympathetic design’



Brian Marshall
Columnist

For most folks, the term “sympathetic design” in architecture is both vague and confusing. So I thought we’d take the time to loosely put some arms around it.

Without going into too much depth, the principal criteria that must be complied with in any design defined as “sympathetic” are: character, scale, form, siting, materials, colours and detailing.

But, rather than providing boring definitions of each criteria (email me at homeguide.ca@gmail.com if you’d like those), I thought we’d look at three examples of sympathetic design in practice.

Our first example comes from the Dartmouth Park historic conservation area in London, England. The site is just down the road from the Grove Terrace, one of the most beautiful Georgian terraces in London.

The initial design idea was inspired by the historic open green spaces along the Highgate Road, to essentially reinstate that green space close to how it was back in 1873.

This recreated green space would act as buffer for the new architecture and the six two-storey mews houses would appear to be a single storey from Highgate Road, to preserve the clear unbroken green line when viewed from the street.

The entrances to the houses were placed on College Lane, not Highgate Road, to enhance the Victorian architectural grain while matching the other old historic cottages farther south along the road.

The architects engaged in an extensive study of Dartmouth Park’s existing architecture and conducted discussions with the local design review panel (which also encompasses heritage preservation).

From this input, they determined that the way to go was to use local London stock brick formed in arches to reference the local colours and the railway arches, tunnels and bridges that exist in proximity to the site.

Further, their study of buildings in and around the local area showed, in various forms, the evolution of Neo-classical British architecture. These historic buildings highlight a strong mixture of rectangles and arches set within a brick canvas that are common in the neighbourhood.

Key principles from this historic grain led the architects to refine the existing design properties in the area to its purest forms: the rectangle and arch.

The result is a modern interpretation of the historic forms and materials which



Brian Marshall says this home is an example of a contextually appropriate infill.

is directly informed by and references the existing neighbourhood.

It re-establishes the 19th-century green spaces between the buildings, reflects the height of the older buildings on the opposite side of Highgate, and provides clear unbroken sight lines onto the surrounding historic architecture while preserving the existing lines of sight from those buildings across the neighbourhood.

In short, modern architecture that is completely contextual within the conservation area.

The second example comes from New York City, in the heart of Brooklyn’s Little Italy, an area dominated by its rich heritage of 19th-century tenement buildings designed in the Italianate style.

The challenge in this case was to create a modern condominium building that would be informed by and reflect the inspiration of the neighbourhood’s historic Italianate tenements while still being identifiable as a contemporary design.

By setting the height of the new building’s massing consistent with that of adjacent old buildings, the rhythm of the streetscapes was maintained. From there, the architects focused on the cladding of the new design. Their choice was custom-profiled brick in the red-orange colour that commonly appears in the neighbourhood.

Traditionally, Italianate tenement buildings featured a tripartite façade that consisted of a base, middle and top, with differing details and brickwork used for

each portion.

Emulating this tradition, the design’s façade pattern consists of banding at the building’s base on floors 1 and 2, pediment windows at the middle on floors 3 to 5, and arched windows and a cornice at the top portion on floor 6. Quoining details define the bays.

While the façade pattern is traditional, the application of the hand-moulded domed bricks is very modern— each brick was carefully positioned within the double-stacked running bond coursing to present the illusion of an Italianate façade and stepping back the penthouse virtually eliminated its visibility from street level, enhancing streetscape integration.

Here again, sympathetic design creates a contextually appropriate addition to

a neighbourhood.

Finally, let’s examine an example from closer to home in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Down on Gate Street between Prideaux and Front stands a house that, at first glance, appears to be a 19th-century Queen Anne but upon closer examination reveals itself as a modern build.

Located on its lot in manner that repeats the street’s setbacks and void spaces, the height of the two-storey dwelling is balanced by both the Oban Inn and a two-storey house directly across the street.

Drawing its design inspiration from period Queen Anne builds in town (e.g. Fanny’s House at 177 King St.), the architect chose to draw on locally common cladding materials, clapboard and shingles.

Painted in soft, demure historical colours, the house in every way recalls and respects its association with the history of the neighbourhood and the architecture therein without losing its identifiable modern birthright. This building speaks to a design that contributes to the character of an established organically evolved neighbourhood.

In fact, we can say that it fulfils each of the criteria (character, scale, form, siting, materials/colours and detailing) that we earlier identified as key principles in the practice of sympathetic design.

Brian Marshall is a NOTL realtor, author and expert consultant on architectural design, restoration and heritage.



Many questions about logic of St. Davids roundabout

Dear editor:

A number of articles have appeared in area newspapers concerning the establishment of a roundabout in St. Davids.

Based on these stories, it would appear the Region of Niagara is intent on establishing a roundabout in St. Davids, which would require considerable road work, traffic delays and expropriating land – all of which I would think would be a significant cost.

The region appears to want to do this at a time when everyone’s residential taxes are increasing, along with the cost of housing, food and just plain living.

I think most residents

who elected or regional representatives would feel fiscal restraint should be the policy of the day. Reduce our tax burden, don’t increase it.

The thought processes in play are perplexing and raise a number of questions:

1. The region has indicated that it wants to interact with the residents of St. Davids to address their concerns. Regional Coun. Andrea Kaiser has approached the St. Davids Ratepayers Association in this regard. Notably, the association doesn’t represent all of the constituents of St. Davids but it would be fair to say it does reflect

all of the residents of St. Davids when it states there is massive resistance to the creation of a roundabout.

It appears from some news stories that the association is being put into a position where it is being forced to work with the region’s autocratic objective to build a roundabout.

2. One would have thought a traffic study would have been done that would overwhelmingly justify the significant amount of money needed to build a roundabout versus leaving the intersection a four-way stop, versus stop lights? A cost-benefit analysis? Articles do not mention any traffic studies.

3. It was stated that in one story that “the region’s plan for 2023 is starting a draft design on a roundabout for the St. Davids intersection at York and Four Mile Creek roads, in the village’s commercial centre, a recommendation put forth by a regional environmental assessment report in 2021.” This reference raises an additional plethora of questions:

- a) What commercial district is there in St. Davids. It’s hardly a commercial district? It’s a village.

- b) Why and how does an environmental assessment make recommendations about traffic flows and the need for the construction

of a roundabout? And why is the region relying on an environmental assessment as justification for road construction?

- c) Is the region relying on an environmental assessment to justify the cost of a draft design of a roundabout?

- d) Wouldn’t the money be better spent with a roundabout in Virgil where Four Mile Creek and Highway 55 meet, where significant traffic flows occur and where traffic lights actually slow traffic down significantly at that intersection?

4. Wouldn’t a St. Davids roundabout increase the speed at which cars travel

in the area, create greater safety issues for students of St. Davids Public School, walkers, bicyclists, and cause significant difficulties for residents egressing from Avondale, the dental office, the Old Firehall restaurant, post office, Lion’s Club, St. Davids Golf Course, Warner Road, Tanbark, Four Mile Creek, etc.?

5. How does this roundabout benefit the residents of St. Davids, improve the quaintness/charm of the village, and increase safety for vehicles and pedestrians?

6. Is anyone listening to the objections of St. Davids residents?

*Gienek Ksiazkiewicz
St. Davids*



It's now 43 years since the start of Terry Fox's Marathon of Hope

Dear editor:

Wednesday, April 12, 1980 – the day it all began.

That was the day, 43 years ago, when 21-year-old Terry Fox started his Marathon of Hope.

Accompanied by his best friend Doug Alward (who drove the van while Terry ran a marathon a day), he dipped his artificial leg into the Atlantic Ocean at St. John's, Nfld., to begin his run across Canada to raise money for innovative cancer research.

It was the beginning of a legacy that has inspired a

whole nation and has had a monumental impact on cancer research in Canada.

Terry became a symbol of hope, courage and selflessness. His legacy has inspired generations of Canadians from all walks of life in deeply personal ways.

The more you learn about Terry the person and his unique ability to inspire others, the more passionate you become about honouring his legacy at a local run.

Millions of Canadians feel compelled to follow

his example year after year. You could be one of them this Sept. 17, 2023, at Simcoe Park in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Registration is now open at TerryFox.org.

If you are interested in supporting a team, consider Niagara-on-the-Lake's Team Pillsy, led by Joe Pillitteri, as the team has a huge goal again this year.

And if you are interested in this year's commemorative T-shirt, I can take your order.

The theme is "Dear Terry" and you will be

encouraged to write a message that inspires you and why you continue to honour his legacy.

Maybe you have a story to share about the impact Terry has had in your life.

We are looking forward to the support of the NOTL community at this year's Terry Fox Run on Sunday, Sept. 17.

To order a shirt, please contact me at joankemp10@yahoo.ca or text me at 905-358-4358.

With gratitude,
Joan King
NOTL run co-ordinator



Joe Pillitteri and Joan King sport 2023 Terry Fox shirts. The theme this year is "Dear Terry." EVAN LOREE

Chautauqua, inclusion and 'horse feathers'

Dear editor:

I was quite a fan of the TV series "M*A*S*H" and I particularly enjoyed Col. Sherman T. Potter's turns of phrase. I think my favourite was "Horse feathers!"

I was reminded of this when I read Victor Tarnoy's op-ed in the March 30 edition of The Lake Report, "Chautauqua's character is under threat from development."

It was an interesting column, but toward the end came this startling claim: "Chautauqua is Niagara-on-the-Lake's oldest and largest, most inclusive and diverse neighbourhood."

Colonel Potter would have to say, "Horse feathers!"

Chautauqua has never been inclusive and diverse as we understand these terms today. The Niagara Assembly established the



Col. Sherman T. Potter, from the show "M.A.S.H."

NOTL copy of New York's Chautauqua Institute in 1887 and was founded on its extremely laudable principles: Spirituality, recreation, entertainment and education.

But it was never meant for Indigenous, Black or brown peoples. And, given its definitively Protestant un-

derpinnings, it was certainly never intended for the Jewish or Muslim communities, let alone Irish Catholics.

In 2021, with the murder of George Floyd ever present, the board of the Chautauqua Residents Association asked the members present at the annual general meeting to ratify the following amendment to our bylaws:

"World events compel us, as an association, to examine the multifaceted nature of racism in the world around us. Although we have every reason to be proud of our unique neighbourhood of Chautauqua, we are not an island. We will challenge ourselves to understand and correct any inequities we may discover as we continue to learn about racism."

Unfortunately, the outrage

at this initiative and other issues was literally deafening and a new board was elected.

In denouncing this amendment about racism, a member of the new board of the association said, "This has nothing to do with us!" And a prominent longtime resident of Chautauqua protested, "We are not the world."

Now, there are many fine, good-hearted people in the 240 or so households of Chautauqua and many have helped to make the Town of Niagara-On-The-Lake a better place to live.

But when someone claims Chautauqua is Niagara-on-the-Lake's "most inclusive and diverse neighbourhood," I'm with Colonel Potter. "Horse feathers!"

Peter Millard
NOTL

Friends of Forgotten appreciates support from NOTL council

Dear editor:

Friends of the Forgotten would like to thank Niagara-on-the-Lake council for its unanimous vote on March 21 to support our group's work in principle.

Our mission is to respectfully restore the final resting place of Niagara Baptist Church parishioners buried at the Mississauga Street site known historically as the Negro Burial Ground.

Many of these people were part of Niagara-on-the-Lake's historic Black community, which included enslaved people, freedom seekers from the United States, Black Loyalists, free people and their descendants.

We believe the site should properly honour the parishioners' place in the town's heritage and reflect the importance of Black history in NOTL.

Our group formed last fall with the goal of bringing the same level of attention, care and respect to this burial ground as is given to other important historic sites in town.

Since then, we have learned a great deal not only about the site and the parishioners buried there, but also the processes and regulations surrounding burial sites in Ontario.

The Bereavement Authority of Ontario is the governing body for all burial sites and cemeteries in the province, and any actions taken on these sacred grounds need the authority's approval and must follow its regulations.

As the owner of the property, the Town of

NOTL is responsible for maintaining the site.

Before any plans can be finalized to transform the site into a worthy memorial, a phase 1 archeological study must be completed.

Our group raised the \$5,000 required for the study, which the town commissioned. Once the results are received, plans for the site and next steps will be determined in conjunction with the Bereavement Authority and the town. Town staff will report back to council with future recommendations at that time.

One of our group's founding tenets is a desire to work collaboratively with the town, residents and other stakeholders to make this burial ground a point of pride for Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Members of the Friends of the Forgotten, (which includes George Webber, Niki Walker, René Berschi, Cheryl Morris, Audrey Pellett, Sarah Kaufman, Lissa Paul, Betty Knight, Jamie Knight, Juliet Dunn, Barbara Worthly and Kiera Sangster) are excited to be the only officially endorsed group working to fundraise for the burial site.

The town is accepting donations for the site on our behalf and issuing tax receipts, as well. To donate, please visit notl.com.

For more information on our group, its effort and how to contribute, please see the Friends of the Forgotten website at negro-burialgroundnotl.org.

Friends of the Forgotten
NOTL

Burroughs' statement on envelope exchange

Coun. Gary Burroughs issued the following statement regarding the incident reported last month by The Lake Report.

As is now well known, an incident occurred more than a month ago involving myself and Benny Marotta, which I reported to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and is now subject to an investigation by Niagara Regional Police.

I have been instructed not to comment further while the incident is under investigation. At this time, however, I am compelled to clarify a few salient facts pertaining to this issue:

The incident occurred Saturday, March 4, not March 11, as has been previously reported. On Sunday, March 5, I reported the incident to a senior official within my church while the



Coun. Gary Burroughs.

town offices were closed. On Monday, March 6, I reported the incident to the town's chief administrator and delivered the envelope to the town offices.

I am participating in the investigation with the police and have given them a statement.

Throughout more than two decades in politics, at no time have I ever sought or solicited money or any

other benefit from anyone, including Mr. Marotta.

In the days following the incident — out of concern for the unlawful implications of what occurred — I personally reported the incident to the police while I continued to wait for a response from the town.

I would like to comment on the issue of conflict of interest in relation to matters before the town involving Mr. Marotta and his companies.

In my view, I do not have a conflict of interest. Nothing has occurred that prevents me from assessing the merits of any application in a fair and unbiased way. That said, I have asked integrity commissioner Ted McDermott to review and offer an opinion on the matter.

I agree with those who

say that this incident ought to remind us all of the need for complete transparency and vigilance regarding dealings among elected officials, town staff and those who seek town approval for their business dealings.

Finally, I have held elected office in this town and this region for more than 25 years and I can say — thankfully — nothing like this has ever happened to me before.

The entire incident has created significant stress for me, my wife Sarah, my family and friends. We look forward to the completion of the ongoing investigations.

In the meantime, I am getting on with the business of council and serving my constituents to the best of my ability.

Coun. Gary Burroughs
NOTL



Why a hotel **isn't** right for Parliament Oak

The following is a letter to the lord mayor and council.

I understand the Parliament Oak property at 325 King St. in Old Town is zoned institutional or greenbelt and the developer was well aware of this zoning and what he was allowed to build when he purchased the land.

I'm sure that members of council will agree their responsibility is to determine what is the ultimate and best use of this land and what will offer the greatest benefit to the community, and not necessarily the greatest benefit to the developer.

This is simply a land-use issue and, at this very preliminary stage, the design of the building in this proposal is totally irrelevant (although, it's a building I would expect to see in Paris or Brussels, not in Niagara).

I make the following comments as a resident in the area and as an architect who has been involved in the design and operation of almost every hotel in the Old Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

This block of land is surrounded on all four sides by small single-family houses. The reason that one should



Parliament Oak.

never impose an intensive use such as a large commercial hotel and conference centre in the middle of small single-family houses is not theoretical; it's very logical.

Any hotel operation requires a large number of service trucks bringing in tons of food, beverages and supplies daily and removing garbage, recycling materials and waste every day.

These trucks will use the shortest and quickest routes to get to the hotel and those routes are Regent, Centre and Gage streets. As the site plans show, all servicing and deliveries take place on Centre and Gage.

Dozens of trucks will be travelling four and a half blocks from Mississauga

Street through narrow village roads to reach these service areas. These are not pickup trucks.

If you've seen Sysco or Gordon Food Service trucks, you'll know that these are transport trucks – and big trucks and small homes aren't compatible. That's basically why a large hotel shouldn't be located in the middle of a neighbourhood consisting only of single-family houses.

But it's not only trucks that are a concern. Cars will also be a problem since the hundreds of staff will be driving from other areas in the Niagara Peninsula to work at the hotel.

I calculated from the drawings submitted that there will be more than 700 dining and lounge seats. Yet only about one-third of those seats will be occupied by the hotel guests.

Therefore, contrary to R.V. Anderson's report, the parking shown is about one-third of what should be provided when staff, dining guests, conference-goers and meeting attendees are added to the hotel's guest parking requirements. These cars will also be

travelling not only on King Street but also on Regent, Centre and Gage, where they may be parking, destroying these narrow roads lined with small heritage homes.

In conclusion, this developer has a habit of buying land with specific zoning and then trying to change its use to anything that will maximize his profit. The community and council showed him that he couldn't do that at Randwood and hopefully they will have the same resolve with the Parliament Oak school site.

As tiresome as this is becoming, we are under no obligation to please the developer or to consider a hotel as an appropriate use for this property.

The developer should be encouraged to propose a use consistent with the zoning that applied to the land when he purchased it, and he should ensure that any future use will be compatible with the neighbourhood in use, size, scale and character.

**Wayne Murray
Chapman Murray
Associates Architects Inc.
NOTL**

Churches **not** listed in town's community guide

Dear editor:

Are our churches here in Niagara-on-the-Lake unimportant? Apparently, the town thinks so.

In the town's just-published Community Guide you can read in detail the information about the Dickens Fellowship, the Newcomers Club and a host of other activities in town – but if you want to check out NOTL's churches, you'd better be able to read a QR code because that's all you see under the heading of Religious Activities on page 26.

Greeting card making, mah jong and William Shakespeare Revisited are described in full on Page 26 for the reader's easy access.

Look at the page – last and apparently least is our town's Religious Activities – just a QR code.

I alerted our church's leader and their reaction was outrage: That's no good! Some people don't have smartphones. Our congregation is made up of seniors and some do not want anything to do with computers or smartphones.

It shows the community



we are less important than everyone else.

So, maybe that's how our town and our council really feel. The only other QR codes in the entire magazine are for maps of paid parking (page 18) and a park locator (page 20).

Does our town (and its employees) really care about its churches and the new residents who may want to find a church?

Perhaps we will find out if they apologize to our local congregations and commit to treating our churches in future issues as a fully recognized and vibrant part of our community.

Or will they just say, "Too bad – we didn't plan and we ran out of page space"?

**John Sayers
NOTL**

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Nancy Bailey recognized as "Elite Club" Advisor in Engel & Völkers Americas Network

Engel & Völkers Americas announced that Nancy Bailey has been recognized as a Diamond Level Real Estate Advisor in the global company's 2022 Elite Club.

Nancy has achieved this award four years in a row.

"Nancy Bailey is a true representative of the expertise and unparalleled level of

service that is consistently showcased by Engel & Völkers advisors worldwide," said Scott Russell, License Partner and Broker of Record, Engel & Völkers Oakville. "Nancy's outstanding achievements evidence her being a leader in Niagara's local marketplace, and we could not be more proud."

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NANCY BAILEY

Heritage committee wants Parliament Oak features preserved

Continued from Front Page

two additions.

The first was to “assesses development alternatives or mitigative measures for the direct impacts to the 1948 school building” and the second was that Two Sisters develop a commemoration plan to go with the demolition permit.

“The documentation and salvage plan will identify materials that are from the site that could be reused in the proposed development or in the community elsewhere,” Giansante told the committee.

He identified several objects of heritage interest that the team from Two Sisters was interested in preserving.

These included two flat sculptures on the south side of the school, a flat stone sculpture depicting an oak tree on the east side of the gym, a stone oak tree marker from 1915 and a statue on King Street commemorating the Underground Railroad.

Peter Lesdow, the architect of the hotel, told the committee the “downtown heritage character” of Niagara-on-the-Lake was “the main criteria” for the development of the hotel.

“Trees around the perimeter of the site are to be maintained,” he said.

Much of the asphalt parking that currently exists at the site will be removed, Lesdow said.

The new hotel will have more greenspace than the existing school because



Two Sisters Resorts Corp. has plans to demolish the old Parliament Oak school with intentions to preserve some of its heritage features EVAN LOREE

most of the parking will be underground, he said.

Committee member David Snelgrove said there was a time capsule in the school and he felt its contents needed to be “preserved in some way and respected.”

His second concern was that the plaques with the school’s name located over the school’s doors had not been listed for preservation in the plan presented by Two Sisters.

Lashia Jones, a heritage specialist with Stantec, assured Snelgrove the capsule and the plaques would be included in the heritage

conservation plan.

Snelgrove asked if the developer would agree to a heritage easement with the town to help preserve the building’s history.

The Ontario Heritage Trust defines an easement as a “voluntary legal agreement” that helps to preserve heritage features on sensitive properties.

Snelgrove said the easement could “clarify the preservation of artifacts, could clarify what happens if there’s a sale.”

Sara Premi, a lawyer employed by Two Sisters, said she could not comment on Snelgrove’s suggestion until

consulting with her client.

She told the committee that many of the heritage features can be protected under the commemoration plan and heritage impact assessment prepared by the Two Sisters team.

Coun. Gary Burroughs wanted to know if heritage features identified by previous owners had been included in the commemoration plan.

And Coun. Tim Balasiuk pointed out there were foundations from the old home of Josiah Plumb under the school.

Horne said this has been discussed with the appli-

cant and said if anything is found deep underground during construction, “all work would cease.”

“Will there be an archeologist on site, or are we at the mercy of the construction workers doing the digging?” said committee member Amanda Demers.

“It’s not typical for an archeologist to be out on site,” Horne said.

Demers also pointed out the school is one of NOTL’s few pieces of post-war architecture and asked for a “more in-depth report” examining those features.

Architect and committee member Brian Marshall

argued the architecture of the old school is “quite unremarkable.”

“It’s standard sort of 1950s mid-century institutional architecture,” he said.

Horne pointed out that the town would have 60 days to bring any additional reports back to the heritage committee after requesting them.

After that, a demolition permit can be issued without conditions.

The committee acknowledged the permit request and asked Two Sisters to return within 60 days with a waste management plan for the demolition.

Former B&B president says 2% tax is ‘difficult’ to implement

Continued from Front Page

only 12 would have to collect the accommodation tax.

That list had grown to 343 licensed short-term rentals as of February 2023.

Of those, 307 are bed and breakfasts, cottage rentals or vacation apartments.

The remaining 36 are country inns and villas, classified as having four or more rooms.

Even if all 36 of the villas and country inns are collecting the room tax, the town will still be receiving revenue from a minority of short-term rental operators.

Currently short-term rentals are regulated entirely by the town’s short-term rental bylaw.

Coun. Gary Burroughs says the town’s bylaw on short-term rentals needs to be updated.

“We (the short-term rental committee) filed our final report in July 2021. It was passed by council and sent to staff for review. Well, we haven’t got that back yet,” he said.

Town spokesperson Marah Minor told The Lake Report that staff “is currently reviewing and updating the short-term rental bylaw.”

Minor said staff would bring the updated bylaw to council later this year, but did not say when.

The former council decided not to force smaller short-term rental operators to collect the tax because of how complicated the collection process is, said Burroughs.

He said the councillors thought “it was too complicated to collect rental income” from the smallest operators.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita explained that short-term rentals are often operated by homeowners or couples looking to supplement their income.

“As a private owner of a home you don’t have administrative people,” she said.

As well, when council approved the room tax, “it was during COVID,” Cheropita said.

Council was concerned about the impact the tax would have to small businesses operating in the short-term rental community, she said.

One potential solution is to contract the tax collection to a third party, she said.

Cheropita said the Ontario Hotel and Motel Association is a good option for collecting the room tax.

“They are already experienced and have been doing it for many municipalities for a number of years,” she said.

Another solution, proposed by David Levesque, former president of the NOTL Bed & Breakfast Association, is to charge a flat fee to operators, rather than calculating it as a percentage of the room rate.

Levesque said operators are not opposed to the tax but that they want a simpler process.

“A flat fee would be much easier to implement for smaller operators,” he said.

Short-term rental operators usually run their business with property management software, Levesque said.

This software helps owners to book rooms,

charge renters and calculate taxes.

However, Levesque said operators have a variety of software to choose from and not all of them can calculate the town’s room tax efficiently.

So, many rental owners have to switch to new systems, he said.

He said even hotels with substantially more resources than family-run B&Bs are struggling to implement the tax “from a technological level.”

Why is it so complicated? First, the town levies the tax on the room rate.

The rate and room tax are then added together for a new total. The harmonized service tax (HST) is then added to the new total.

“That’s very, very difficult to implement,” Levesque said and not every property management

system is equipped to do it.

In the meantime, “we’re still collecting last year’s money,” Burroughs said.

Minor said the first instalment of the room tax was due Jan. 2 but the town offered a 90-day grace period, which ended April 3.

That first tax instalment only covers July to September 2022, though.

Burroughs pointed out there are potential flaws with the room tax as well because businesses do not have to report their finances to the town.

Hotels and other short-term renters do not have to disclose their room rates so it’s left to “the honour system” to ensure compliance, he said.

Minor said the town has the right to audit operators of short-term rentals to check for compliance.

Seven minutes of mayhem at **Bunny Trail** egg hunt

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

It was all over in about seven minutes.

Hundreds of kids, from Niagara-on-the-Lake and beyond, hit the fields at the community centre on Saturday to hunt for chocolate Easter eggs — about 60 kilograms (or 10,000) of them.

They didn't leave much behind.

The hunt is a NOTL tradition put on by the Kinsmen Club, now joined with Niagara Nursery School's popular Bunny Trail celebration and fundraiser.

This year the school raised just over \$7,800 through ticket sales, sponsorships and its bake sale.

Candice Penny, executive director of Niagara Nursery School, said there was a "great turnout."

"The sun's shining, it's been awesome," she said, just after the hunt ended.

"The kids are very determined and they do a great job each year."



Kinsmen Hans Pauls tosses out eggs before the hunt.

The field was pretty soggy after some heavy rain the day before, but "the Kinsmen were great and marked out any really kind of mucky parts on the grass," Penny said.

"And thankfully the rain stopped just in time for most things to dry out."

The hunt was at 10 a.m. sharp, but lots of people showed up right at 9 a.m. for the start of the Bunny Trail activities, which included musical instruments, crafts, a bake sale, a NOTL fire truck and Easter games.

"We're just so grateful for the continued support from our sponsors — our community sponsors, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake for helping us with set up, as well as all the community coming out each and every year," she said.

Conor MacNeill, whose son Declan, 10, won a prize for finding one of three specially marked golden eggs, said it was a "super exciting" morning for the kids.

"It's always great to get out here. (Declan) loves it. It's nice way to spend the morning and see friends from class," he said.

MacNeill used to go to the Kinsmen egg hunt when he was little, too.

"I grew up in Niagara-on-the-Lake and I remember coming down to it when it was at Simcoe Park," he said.

He and his son go to the egg hunt every year, after which they spend some time looking for realtor Stefan Regier's golden egg — another NOTL Easter tradition.



Top: Children hurry to pick up chocolate eggs during the annual egg hunt. Bottom left: Declan MacNeill, pictured with friend Nathan Flynn, found one of the marked golden eggs and earned a special prize. Right: Sophie Kohut, 8, gets into playing the violin during the Bunny Trail event following the Kinsmen egg hunt. RICHARD HARLEY

The "REAL" Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake THE BUYERS ARE BACK! Spring 2023 Market Update

March roared in like a lion with 85 new listings, 24 sales and fewer average days to sell, down from 68 in February to 51 days in March.

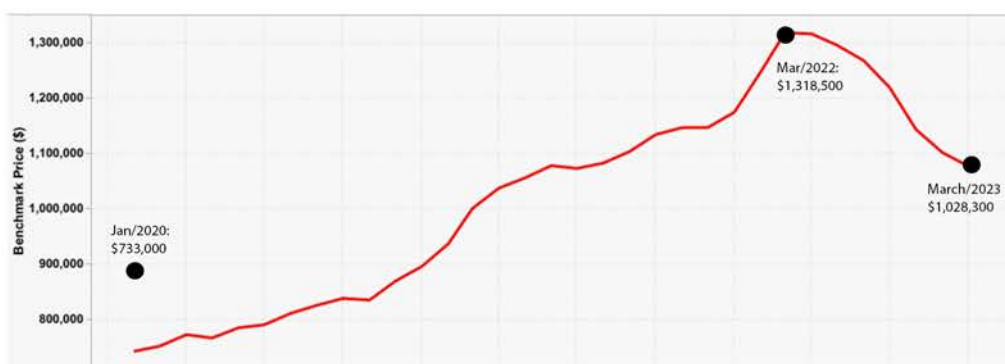
The average home price index (HPI) in March was \$1,028,300, versus \$1,318,500 in March 2022, a drop of approximately 22%.

Factors that contributed to the one year slide:

- Government intervention (Nine interest rate increases totalling 4.75%)
- Forty year high inflation rate
- Post-Covid recovery

March 2023 real estate values are similar to the values we saw in April 2021.

NOTL real estate is still highly desirable and coveted, with average price gains exceeding 40% since January 2020.



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Search for golden egg a **full day's work**, but it paid off

Richard Harley
The Lake Report

Late at night on Friday (or early Saturday morning), Stefan Regier snuck out of his house, careful that nobody was watching him.

He had a top-secret mission — hide this year's golden egg somewhere in one of Niagara-on-the-Lake's parks.

It has to be a secret, because whoever finds it receives the grand prize — this year it was \$500 cash.

It's an Easter tradition for all ages, one Regier has been doing for eight years.

This is a story about how my family, with determination, found the golden egg this year.

We left the house at about 7:30 a.m., headed out to scour NOTL parks. Living in Chautauqua, the first natural place to look was Chautauqua Park — there are plenty of bushes, a back corner where kids like to hide and a playground.

It could have been the spot. But so could Ryerson Park, or maybe Simcoe? Our guess was as good as anyone's.

Our morning search led us through Chautauqua Park, Ryerson Park, Veteran's Memorial Park, Simcoe Park, Queen's Royal Park, Newark Park and the little tennis parkette in Garrison Village.

We had heard through NOTL's plentiful grapevines that the egg tends to stay around Old Town, so we didn't venture out to St. Davids or Queenston.

But we didn't find it.

A look at Regier's Facebook page showed a video reel that confirmed: "It's out there ... Right now ..." followed by a taunting picture of a golden egg, set to the tune of "Money for Nothing" by Dire Straits.

We could tell this day was going to be interesting.

A break at about 9:30 a.m. for the Kinsmen egg hunt and Bunny Trail put us back on the hunt by 11 a.m.

From there, we headed out to Rye Heritage Park and Centennial Sports Park, determined to find the egg.

But no luck!

Hmm, where could this



The kids were smiling ear-to-ear after we found the golden egg. From left, Alanna McDonald, Landon Archibald (with egg), Richard Harley, Liam Archibald. SUPPLIED

egg be? And what does it even look like?

Questions were burning in our minds as much as our legs were burning from hiking up and down hills and paths. Our boots and shoes were soggy and muddy.

Then came another video from Regier ... "How about a clue?" it said.

"How about, no," it followed.

Now we were sure he was taunting us. A trickster of immense proportion. A rascal. A scallywag.

But it only fuelled our hunt.

One of our boys wasn't feeling the best, but he pushed through, with hopes of a fancy new toy at the end of the day.

Running out of parks to search, we decided to

try some again. Back to Queen's Royal, back to Simcoe, back to Rye Park and Chautauqua again — this time searching a bit harder, now that we were awake and the boys had a boost of energy from chocolate eggs and banana bread from the nursery school's bake sale.

But by lunch time we weren't any closer to finding it. Not that we knew, at least.

At this point the boys, Liam and Landon, 8 and 6, were losing steam. We'd been searching for a while, with nothing but soakers to show for our efforts, so I got two toonies out of my pocket and strategically placed them so each kid would find one. It gave them a bit of a second wind.

Heading home for some

lunch and a quick rest, we saw a third video from Regier.

"I see you ... You're six feet away ... Question is ... Who are you?"

OK — now that's a real clue, we thought for a moment. Or maybe not. Was he talking to us, or someone else in a completely different park?

Thinking about it, we realized this was the best prank of all. Anyone like us who was searching and saw the video was probably retracing their steps at that point.

And we played into it. The time stamp of the video and thinking about where we were just before it was posted put us near the back of Rye Park.

So after sandwiches and

snacks, we headed back for a third time.

Up and down the park we searched ... and this time, I found something ... it was a lone golden egg laying in the field.

But it wasn't THE golden egg we were looking for and I realized it right away.

This one was a foil-wrapped chocolate egg with a couple of bunnies on it. And it was more of a shiny yellow than gold. But it didn't stop me from playing my own trick on my family.

"Look!" I shouted. "I found a golden egg!"

We chuckled at the irony and slim chances we'd find a different golden egg in the field. And we began to think maybe someone else had found the real one.

We suspected it would be in a "traditional" park — one with a playground and not a massive one like Niagara Shores Park. But after a full day of searching, we decided it couldn't hurt to try there, too.

So at about 2:30 p.m., off to Niagara Shores we went. This is one of our favourite places to take a walk, anyway. We love to see the wildlife and look for mushrooms.

On our way, we saw the fourth video reel from Regier.

"3 p.m., first clue," it said. So nobody else had found it yet! Fantastic!

We hustled our walk so we'd be back to the car in time to get the clue and speed off if we recognized where it was.

At 2:59 p.m. we arrived at the car, all of us in suspense.

We were tired and had lost most hope of finding the egg, but there was a renewed enthusiasm now, knowing we might get a genuine clue.

3:01 ... 3:02 ... 3:03 ... We waited. Until it finally came.

"Every Thursday ... Dinner starts at 4 p.m. After that ... head for a swim," it said.

The video was set to the tune "Fish and Chips and Vinegar" by Sharon, Lois & Bram — but we didn't need the song to clue in.

We're fish fry people. And we knew we were headed to the Legion.

With the second part

about the swimming pool, we guessed it was likely right in between the Legion and the pool at Memorial Park.

Already in the car, we headed straight there, parking near the pool. When we arrived two families were already searching. They'd been following Regier's videos, too.

The race was on and the adrenalin kicked in. Everybody was searching frantically, hoping to be the one to find it.

And within about 10 minutes, a flock of treasure hunters had descended on the park. Dozens of people were running around. It was madness.

Families, couples, solo hunters — all of us in the park, searching under every stone and tree trunk.

Then, to my disbelief, I spotted it. It was nested under a tree, barely visible.

Almost everyone there had walked by it several times — I had walked past it early in the morning.

I snuck over and tried to keep it secret that I'd found it, because my partner and the kids were on the other side of the park and I wanted them to be there.

But kneeling down, I felt like I was doing a bad job of hiding an idol I'd just found on the show "Survivor."

I turned around to see if anyone was watching and was spotted by none other than Ryan Gaio.

"Did you find it?" he asked.

I couldn't hold it in. "Yes!"

The news spread like wildfire through the park and everyone came up to see the golden prize.

It was an egg shell, hollowed out and painted gold, with a rolled-up note inside.

It said to call Regier and speak the secret password to claim the prize. The password was "abacus."

The boys were screaming they were so excited.

"This is the best day ever!" Landon exclaimed.

We went home tired, but thankful. And the boys are still deciding whether they want to spend the prize money on hoverboards or a VR headset.

But that's up to mom!

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'They're all champions,' coach says of silver medallist Wolves

Kevin MacLean
The Lake Report

As far as coach Joe Pagnotta is concerned, every one of his team's 13 players is a winner.

"They're all champions," he said after the U11 Niagara-on-the-Lake Wolves rep team took the silver medal at the Ontario Minor Hockey Association championship tournament on Sunday in Barrie.

Competing against some of the best under-11 teams at their level, the Wolves clawed their way into the final but came away on the short end of a 6-2 decision to the Strathroy Jr. Rockets.

"I'm super proud of their accomplishments, not just from this weekend but throughout the season," he said in an interview.

"Their development has been crucial and it's been awesome to watch their progress from day one," he said.

"They work so hard and they just never give up."

The team roster is comprised of: #4 Hunter Froese, #9 Nello Pagnotta, #10 Charlie Rowaan, #11 Ben Bayne, #17 August Felice, #18 Miller Davis, #19 Luke Simpson, #20 Vincenzo Coppola, #21 Eli Perng, #47 Tennyson Powell, #71 Ryder Kallies, #87 James Froese and #88 Mason Nichols.

Making it to the OMHA tournament was one of the team's goals eight months ago when they started out.

Pagnotta and his coaching staff of Glen Davis, Derek Nichols and Sean Simpson recognized they had something special in this team and knew they had a chance to make some noise in the playoffs.

But nothing came easy.



Coaches and members of the NOTL Wolves U11 rep hockey team pose with their finalist banner. SUPPLIED

They knocked off first-place Thorold in the OMHA qualifiers and then beat the same team again two weeks ago – in a shootout after triple overtime – to win the Niagara District Hockey League title.

They were already going to the OMHA tourney, so that victory was icing on the cake against a very tough Thorold squad.

Arriving in Barrie, they won their first two games in dominant style, beating Mount Brydges 3-0 last Friday morning behind the shutout goaltending of Mason Nichols and then they stormed back from a 1-0 second-period deficit to stun the Midland Centennials 4-1.

That ensured them a spot in Sunday morning's semifinal but they still had one more round-robin game against the

Saugeen Shores Storm on Saturday afternoon.

That game determined who NOTL's opponent would be in the semifinal but little went right for the Wolves as they were thumped 6-0 by Saugeen.

Then playing at 8:15 Sunday morning against the Tillsonburg Tornados, the number 1 team on the other side of the draw, it was unclear what to expect after such a one-sided loss.

Hard work and never giving up could be mottos for the Wolves, who found their game again and beat Tillsonburg 2-1 in double overtime.

Luke Simpson, the team's hero in their shootout Niagara District victory, scored the winning goal on a wrist shot from the top of the left circle.

Saugeen, meanwhile, lost 6-2 to Strathroy,

which set up a battle of the number 2 seeds for the championship.

While only Simpson and James Froese scored for NOTL in the final, Pagnotta said his team never let up and credited every one of his players for helping the team get to the championship.

Though the kids would have much preferred to come home with gold, he emphasized how proud everyone was of what they had accomplished over the season.

"This doesn't happen every year, to be second in Ontario in their age group, at their level," he said.

"Some of them will never have this opportunity again. And some people have never had this opportunity, ever."

"They came out as silver medallists. They should be

super, super, super proud of themselves."

Tournament recap

The Wolves beat Mount Brydges 3-0 in Friday's first game in what might have been a textbook example of the team's ability.

"We're a hard-working team from top to bottom. The energy these kids have is out of this world. It's awesome to see," Pagnotta said.

That team defence by everyone on the ice has been a big part of the NOTL team's success, he said.

The Wolves have plenty of offensive talent, but "I don't think we're a flashy team, just a hard-working, productive team. The wheels are constantly moving," Pagnotta said.

On Friday, James Froese (with the highlight-reel game winner scored while down on one knee on the rush), Luke Simpson and

Ben Bayne all found the net against Mount Brydges.

Bayne added two assists, while Simpson and Tennyson Powell had one each and Mason Nichols' shutout earned him player of the game honours.

In game two, NOTL outplayed Midland throughout, outshooting their opponents 21-9, but the Wolves fell behind 1-0 in the second period after a scoreless first.

Cue the comeback as NOTL stormed back with four unanswered goals.

Simpson scored on his own rebound to tie things up in the second and Hunter Froese rifled a low shot for what proved to be the game winner early in the third.

Eli Perng then split the defence on a rush to make it 3-1.

And August Felice sealed it, scoring on a penalty shot with 4:37 to go.

Perng was player of the game against both Midland and in the loss to Saugeen.

In Sunday morning's semi, Simpson was NOTL's hero yet again, scoring in the second overtime period to earn the Wolves a spot in the final.

His goal was an Easter Sunday present of sorts for his mom Stephanie who was celebrating her birthday. He also was named player of the game.

Nello Pagnotta won player of the game honours in the final against Strathroy.

That win over Tillsonburg was a huge bounceback for the Wolves after the forgettable 6-0 loss to Saugeen in their last round-robin match.

The Cinderella run ended against Strathroy but, as Coach Pagnotta observed, his team had a season that no one associated with the Wolves will soon forget.

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Dietsch hopes to play in the OHL

Continued from Front Page

highest level.

The U16 year (formerly minor midget) is a big season for players with dreams of playing major junior hockey or – eventually – at the pro level.

It's their junior draft year and OHL scouts attend many of their games and tournaments, trying to find the players who will fill their teams' future needs.

The even-tempered young Dietsch takes it all in stride. He's confident in his skills but knows he still has lots of work to do.

"My ultimate goals are to get drafted, to make the starting lineup and to keep improving my game," he says in an interview.

The lanky lockdown defenceman, whose role with the Admirals was often to go up against his opponents' most dangerous scorers, recognizes that, if he's drafted, making it onto the roster of an OHL team next fall could be a long shot.

But he's committed to do what is necessary to get bigger, better and stronger.

Kevin Rosebrugh, his coach for the past two years with the Admirals, has high praise for his young D-man. "He's a really good kid. He had a tremendous start to the season and was one of the best defencemen at the Silver Stick tournament in Whitby in November," he says in an interview.

He figures that performance is what earned Dietsch the invite to the Team Ontario camp prior to the Canada Winter Games.

He didn't make the team but that just inspired him to work harder, Rosebrugh says.



Kaleb Dietsch competes at the OHL Cup tournament. DAN HICKLING/OHL IMAGES

"I think he can do it all, really. He's just a terrific defender. He has a really good stick. He gaps well, he turns pucks over defensively, wins a lot of board stuff. He makes good first passes," he says.

"And I think he'll have more offensive stuff to his game as he grows and gets older."

Most OHL scouts see Dietsch as a "shutdown defenceman, a defensive guy that can also make plays with the puck," Rosebrugh added.

And as he gets stronger and adds to his 177-pound frame, he'll only get better and even tougher to play against, he says.

If Dietsch is not in the OHL next season, he could play provincial junior or junior B. That remains to be seen. The Erie Otters have the number 1 pick and the Niagara IceDogs choose second in the April 21-22 draft.

Sitting at a quiet table at the Sand Trap in NOTL, with his proud parents Natasha and Paul (who co-owns the pub with his brother Matt), the family is

looking forward to what the future might hold.

Kaleb started skating about age 3, so they've spent almost 15 years travelling to games and tournaments all over the province with him and his older brother Liam, also a talented AAA defenceman.

Dad Paul says Kaleb has worked hard to get where he is – and having a big brother to look up to sure didn't hurt.

"Our job as parents so far is just to keep him level-headed and motivated, although he doesn't need a lot of help. I find him to be extremely motivated, to be honest," says Paul.

The younger Dietsch says playing in the OHL Cup March 29 to April 3 was "a once-in-a-lifetime experience."

Though the Admirals had a tough draw and lost all four of their games, "We felt it was a good competition, really fast-paced" and a great opportunity to face off against some of the premiere hockey talent in the country.

The Admirals got to the OHL Cup by being runner-up to the Peterborough Petes (who ended up as semifinalists at the showcase). And Southern Tier came oh-so-close in that OMHA final, losing 1-0 to the Petes in triple overtime – so they know they can compete with the best.

Dietsch has fond memories of his days playing in the NOTL Minor Hockey Association. While he's moved on to the elite level, the Holy Cross Secondary student still hangs out and plays pickup games (and lacrosse) with his buddies from town.

And he credits some of his NOTL coaches with helping instill in him the love of the game, mentioning Glen Davis, Trevor Falk, Darren Rossi and Sam Steinbachs among some memorable early influencers.

He wears #4, a coveted jersey for defenders.

Besides the whole Bobby Orr aura, growing up and wanting to follow in the footsteps of Liam, 18, he eventually adopted #4.

Both boys are also talented lacrosse players and hope to play junior in St. Catharines this summer.

He praises all his past coaches for giving him the confidence to go further in hockey – and the Admirals staff this year "who helped push us to our fullest potential."

Looking back, if there's one memorable milestone that helped him realize he might be able excel at the game, he says it happened around age 10.

"It was the major atom year when I was playing for the NOTL Wolves and I was called up to play a few games for the older age group that my brother played on," he says. He fit right in and he enjoyed the experience.

And later that year, he was inspired after he and his teammates skated with the world junior team at the Gretzky outdoor rink.

Hockey will always remain fun and enjoyable, especially when he's on the ice with his buddies. But when he's competing, it's all business, he says.

"When the puck drops, it's game time. I have no outside distractions and I'm only thinking about getting a big W for the team."



This week's riddle is "Jeopardy!" style.
Category: 4,4 (Two four-letter words)

If you can easily determine someone's feelings, you can read him or her like this.

Last issue:

Category: ACTOR-MOGULS

Clue: Happy Madison, Adam Sandler's production company, combines these two Sandler movie titles.

Answer: What are Happy Gilmore and Billy Madison?

Answered first by: Jane Morris

Also answered correctly (in order) by: Bob Wheatley, Susan Hamilton, Pam Dowling, Howard Jones, Susan Dewar, Jim Dandy, Sheila Meloche, Daniel Smith, Nancy Rocca, Wade Durling, Elaine Landray, Claudia Grimwood

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Bikers and travellers choose NOTL to soak up spring sunshine

Evan Loree
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Niagara-on-the-Lake was a popular place for people to soak up the beautiful April sunshine Monday afternoon.

And some swear there's no place like NOTL at this time of year.

"There's no better place in Canada to be than Niagara-on-the-lake in the spring," said resident Anne Browne.

Browne was at Simcoe Park with her husband Jim Fowlow and her son Jackson, who was visiting from Toronto.

"We spend half our time here and half our time in Newfoundland," said Jim Fowlow.

The three agreed that the breeze, the trees and the flowers make NOTL a special place to be as warm spring temperatures take hold.

"There's life here, you know," Browne said.

The family brought their bikes and were cooling



Chrissy Knapp visited from Niagara Falls with her husband Rob. EVAN LOREE

themselves in the shade at the park.

"We love biking. We like to put our car away," Jim Fowlow said.

They were not the only ones putting the car away.

A family of motorcyclists was taking a break with a few coffees in the Tim Hortons parking lot at the corner of Mary and Mississauga streets.

John Hibben said he's been riding for about 35 years and was there with his life-long friend Rob Knapp and his wife Chrissy Knapp.

They were joined by friends and in-laws Scott and Dora Michaud.

Most were decked out in leather jackets and thick leather boots to protect them on their ride.

"This is great riding

weather right now. It's not too cold, it's not hot. Beautiful," Hibben said

"You can wear all your gear and be comfortable," he added.

They've been out on the bikes almost 10 times this spring, a welcome change from a "long, depressing" winter, he added.

Hibben rode in from St. Catharines, the Knapps

came from Niagara Falls and the Michauds set out from Thorold.

Usually the group waits for the snow to melt and the temperatures to rise before they break out the bikes.

Hibben told The Lake Report he and Rob Knapp started riding with dirtbikes and eventually graduated to motorcycles.

Today, it's more of a family affair.

"Everybody rides. That's a great thing, too," he said.

Back at Simcoe Park, Irish tourists James and Joti Thompson were with their two-year-old daughter Kashi.

James was pushing their daughter on the swing while his wife dangled her feet in the empty swing next to them.

"Oh, it's glorious," Joti said, glancing around at the sunlit park.

"We live in Ireland, so our winter is very wet," she said.

The family spent their Easter weekend at Great

Wolf Lodge in Niagara Falls and thought they would stop for an hour in NOTL before heading back to Mississauga.

Joti said her daughter "loves a good park."

The family of three weren't the only ones visiting from far away, though.

Woori Cho travelled with her mom from Vancouver.

Cho said her mom loves to travel and the two were checking out Toronto, Quebec and Niagara Falls on this trip.

A tattoo artist by trade and originally from South Korea, Cho sat relaxing at Queen's Royal Park and looking out at Lake Ontario, the warm sun on her back.

After a "long and cloudy" winter, it was just what she needed. "We've been waiting for springtime for like a month."

"It's so beautiful."

Of all the places she and her mom have been on their trip from Vancouver, Cho said seeing Niagara Falls was the highlight.

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NOTL Museum curator receives 40 under 40 award

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report



Sarah Kaufman is proud to receive the 40 under 40 achievement award. SOMER SLOBODIAN

And the award goes to ... Sarah Kaufman.

Kaufman, the managing director and curator at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum, found out last week that she won a 40 under 40 business achievement award with Niagara's Business Link Media Group.

"It was a delightful surprise," the 37-year-old told The Lake Report.

She was nominated by her co-workers, director of financing and marketing Amy Klassen and board president Mona Babin.

"I didn't think I would actually get it," Kaufman said with a laugh.

In the application, she said Klassen wrote about how much Kaufman has done for the museum in

her 13 years as director and curator.

She talked about the museum's additional programs, like the Kids Curator program, and partnerships Kaufman has created along

with the various community projects she's participated in.

"Like (the) Landscape of Nations and helping to secure some government financial support for that," said Kaufman.

"And working on Voices of Freedom, the War of 1812 and Canada 150," she added.

Kaufman was touched by the nomination and called it "very thoughtful."

"I did start really young in this organization with not knowing very many people in the community," she said. "I've worked really hard, I think, to change the museum's position in the community just in terms of strengthening our relationship with the municipality," she added.

When she first started at the museum, she said it was very quiet and many people thought it was a private organization.

"I wanted to change that public image and make (the) museum more about we're here to support the community through research and exhibits and programs," said Kaufman.

Thirteen years later and she's done exactly that.

"I'm just excited and honoured to be recognized," she said.

Kaufman is looking forward to what is coming at the museum, like its yoga in the courtyard, its historical walking tours and a new exhibit called "Bound and Determined," about famous Black slave Chloe Cooley.

"(I'm) really excited for that exhibit to come up," she said.



Federal Agriculture Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau stops by Pillitteri Estates Winery. SUPPLIED

Pillitteri earns Brock's co-op employer of the year award

Staff
The Lake Report

It's been a busy few spring weeks at Pillitteri Estates Winery in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Federal Agriculture Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau paid a quiet visit during pre-budget consultations, Brock University president Leslie Ring and senior managers took a tour of the NOTL facility – and now the university has bestowed on Pillitteri the school's Co-op Employer of the Year Award for small and medium

enterprises.

In a letter to Jamie Slingerland, the winery's director of viticulture, Brock recognized Pillitteri for "providing quality co-op work term experiences including training and mentorship opportunities for our students."

"Pillitteri has been a long-term partner with Brock University from research to engaging student talent," wrote Julia Zhu, the school's associate director of co-op education.

Each fall, the winery hosts the incoming oenology and viticulture students

to show them the production facilities, Zhu noted.

And, "since 2018, Pillitteri facilitated 17 co-op work terms and you established a year-round co-op student recruitment strategy to give our co-op students full exposure on harvesting and vineyard work," including Brock's first icewine co-op program.

She also credited the winery for its commitment to "learning quality and making each co-op work term experience a unique one based on each student's learning goals."

NOTL Cat Rescue rings in spring

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

From handcrafting floral arrangements to collecting donations, the NOTL Cat Rescue is truly a family affair.

Tanya Rice, the rescue's director of fundraising, opened up her garage for the group's spring floral sale.

Easter-themed floral arrangements made with tulips and geraniums were available with proceeds going toward cat rescue expenses – and donations of food and supplies were accepted with open arms.

"We were setting up the front porch because we had to maximize things from the wind today and while we were setting up people were already waiting in their cars," said Rice.

"This is our third annual and the support from the community and the community initiative has been great."

The planters, put together by Rice, her mother Joyce and a friend with donations



Tanya Rice and her niece Meka show off one of their hand-made floral arrangements for the fundraiser. JULIA SACCO

from Kaulzaric Family Farm were a hit, with over 60 planters being nearly sold out by 1 p.m.

All donations go toward medical bills, emergency medical expenses, spade and neutering, microchipping and housekeeping in general.

"When people foster, they don't pay anything so donations are spread across your foster families," said Rice.

Aside from benefitting the furry friends, Rice is happy to organize these fundraisers as a means of spending time with the community and her family.

"The cat rescue was started by my late sister who lost her battle with MS last November, so we keep the legacy going," said Rice, who was running the event alongside her mom and niece.

Gaining new foster applications and donations, the event was a success, and Rice is already looking forward to the next one.

Gesturing to a shelf in her garage, Rice explained that she will be making the arrangements for the holiday fundraiser.

"Those bins up there are, those are for Christmas!"

A year of celebrations marks Grace United's 200th anniversary

John Sayers
Special to The Lake Report

The Grace United Church congregation is recognizing its 200th anniversary this year and celebrations are already well underway.

Some are clearly evident and others less so as the anniversary committee led by Bill Leighfield begins to work its organizational magic.

Among the less-evident efforts is a major project to digitize the thousands of church archives which go

back well into the 1800s and include congregation lists that disclose "coloured" members as free men in the congregation.

The objective is to preserve the primary source material of 200 years of history and make it accessible to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum and future church and social history scholars.

Done entirely on a volunteer basis, the records and images are being scanned at high resolution and may take the rest of the year to complete.

Starting off quietly with an old-fashioned Pie Social to launch the year, the congregation recently held a catered dinner, unusual because none of the usual phalanx of volunteers had any role in preparing or serving the dinner.

As the organizers said, in a church known for its "worker bees" it was a time when everyone in the congregation should sit back and reflect rather than some of them having to focus on preparing and plating food.

An early Communion plate has been pulled out of

its hiding place, polished diligently, and placed on display in the church as another reminder of our past.

And the congregation is being honoured in September by a visit and service by the moderator of the United Church of Canada, Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne, our most senior elected spiritual leader.

As well, the former moderator, Rev. Dr. Richard Bott, will lead a service on Nov. 19, the exact date of the 200th anniversary. The current minister, Maureen Ellison, like everyone in

the congregation, is honoured and thrilled by the recognition in these visits.

Why the fuss? Well, like other churches in town, the Grace United congregation and its church edifice have a long and fascinating history. The building was designed by William Thomas, the same prominent architect who created St. Michael's Cathedral in Toronto, St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Hamilton and Brock's Monument in Queenston.

The magnificent stained-glass windows memori-

alize the church's early members and casualties in wartime, and the interior reflects the classic Methodist form of practical design.

This is a far cry from the first simple frame building built as a Meeting House at Gage and Gate streets. It is no longer there, but is survived by the Grace United Cemetery at the same location.

We at Grace United have our proverbial seat belts fastened as we continue to rocket into our 200th anniversary year.

 COMMENT

Thinking **outside** the corrugated cardboard box



Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson
The Lake Report

How a change in lifestyle has changed my thinking. For more than 100 consecutive mornings, I have listened to our cenotaph clock chime 10, as I stand on the lower front step of our historic Court House on Queen Street. Patiently and optimistically I wait for locals and tourists to show up for my NOTL Free Walking Tour. But the most striking thing about my new daily routine has been watching in awe as the noisy, gear-grinding recycling trucks go about their business. We live in a wee town. How can we possibly create so much corrugated cardboard to be recycled, almost

every day of the week? The big trucks go this way, they go that way. South on King Street, west on Johnson, north on Regent, east on Prideaux, south on King, west on Queen. Their route map has them avoiding left turns, which are both dangerous and time-consuming. So many broken-down cardboard boxes, and other recyclable items. I have had corrugated cardboard in my veins since 1965, some fifty-eight years ago. That summer, I spent every Saturday in Brantford, working with some rowing buddies from Port Dalhousie at RH Packers. It was a small company owned by Reg Holmes, the father of Paddy Holmes, who rowed bow seat in our St. Catharines Rowing Club's Junior 145-pound. We broke down cardboard boxes, endless amounts of cardboard boxes, and took them to the local landfill. Looking back, I guess I was part of the very early days of recycling. Throw in the scrap steel dealers who my dad worked with to buy raw materials for Atlas Specialty Steels in Welland and society was on its way to be-



Driver Ehsan from Mississauga delivers 48 cases of wine to Wine Country Vintners on Queen Street. ROSS ROBINSON

ing responsible and worrying about our environment. Old cars, old railway tracks, you name it, they melted it down and used it. Perhaps because of this early experience with corrugated cardboard, I have spent way too much time thinking about the number of boxes used daily and the conscientious efforts our society takes to dispose of this necessary bit of our lives. Think about how we depend on this product, NOTLers. Want to order a take out pizza? Why do most pizza meisters use corrugated for their deliveries? Because the waves of the corrugated paper enable warm air to pass below the pizza, ensuring longer heat retention. Betcha didn't know that. Ever wonder why Domino's uses square boxes to deliver their round pizzas? It's because the six-sided box design, with tapered front edges, reduces the amount of cardboard used, thereby limiting the company's carbon footprint. Also, this keeps the pizza from sliding around in the box. And, square boxes stack easier. Makes sense, eh? Now let's ramble over to a natural winger of pizza. Yes, beer. Often I have wondered how 24 heavy bottles of lager can be transported

in a simple cardboard box. Taking this worry to the extreme, I spent some time on the internet and learned that a triple wall corrugated box can hold 245 pounds of product. So, our Oast House Barnraiser is safe. I recently had an enlightening telephone conversation with Allen Kirkpatrick of the Canadian Corrugated and Containerboard Association. He is an industry veteran, passionate about the product and proud of the fact corrugated is more environmentally friendly than ever. It is possible to accept non-toxic water based inks, which can be processed without bleaching. After being recycled, it is used to make chipboard, paperboard (cereal boxes,) paper towels, tissues, and printing and writing paper. A complete circle of recycling. The vast majority of corrugated cardboard is diverted from landfills and recycled instead. It degrades completely within one year. Compare this to the environmental disaster of plastics. I do my best to make accurate statements, backed up by accurate research. I do not

purport to be an academic, presenting scholarly research. But this is what I understand. Between 2004 and 2016, there has been a 50 per cent decrease in paper recycled into landfill. Concurrently, plastic into landfill has doubled. Only 10 per cent of plastic is recycled. And wait for this enlightening stat – corrugated cardboard has been banned at landfill sites. So, wave to the hardworking people working on the big recycling trucks. Yell "Way to go" to them. They work hard in all types of weather, often on slippery, snowy and icy streets. Give them a wide berth and, at Christmas time, perhaps a gracious gratuity. Right here in Canada, corrugated cardboard is produced in every province. You might wonder, "How much? Each and every day in our home and native land, more than 21 million cardboard boxes are shipped by producers. Almost all of it is eventually recycled. And, that's amazing. Our pretty town of NOTL – and NOTLers – are so fortunate. Who knew?



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LIFE WRIT SMALL

NOTL woman is **downsizing** her village of miniatures

Julia Sacco
The Lake Report

As she walks through her hobby room, Cindy Carter can't help but to gush over the details of her work with great pride.

From mansions to hair salons, she has recreated scenes from her life and her dreams, at a scale that can fit into one room of the house.

"Everything I do is at a 1/12th scale," so one inch equals one foot.

Now, she is hoping to downsize.

She began her journey into miniatures about 60 years ago when she was just a child growing up in Dain City, now a suburb of Welland.

"My mother taught me how to knit and crochet, and my father, whenever we would go somewhere, he would buy me these dolls," Carter reminisces.

"It all kind of skyrocketed from there."

Ever since then, Carter has made numerous houses, displays, dolls and furniture pieces representing things she loves and holds dear.

Two pieces that stand out are a replica of her childhood home and a separate piece made as an homage to her late mother.

The home replica features tiny details cleverly constructed to recreate a feeling of childlike wonder.

Everything, down to a replica of her mother's elephant statue from the 1940s, is as exact as it could possibly be.

In the homage to her mother, Carter utilized

old watches to create the storefront of a clock store, complete with a sales clerk and in-store cat. She finds it to be a great use of her mom's accessory of choice.

"I'm a very sentimental person that way."

In order to create these elaborate scenes and memories, Carter says she uses "just about anything and everything."

"Pieces of cardboard, you'll see that my winery is made out of a piece of Styrofoam but you wouldn't know that by looking at it. Play-Doh from the dollar store is great," she says.

"And a little bit of paint goes a long way to disguise things."

One of her more creative uses of everyday objects can be seen in an underwater display made for her now-teenaged grandchildren.

A scuba diver is underwater with what appears to be an oxygen tank, which the miniaturist fashioned out of a recycled tampon applicator.

"There are so many things that people would just throw in the garbage, whereas I think 'How can I use that,'" Carter laughs.

Miniatures have been a staple in Carter's life. From her beginnings in Niagara, to her time as the wife of a Canadian diplomat in Warsaw, she always found time for hobbies.

"We were there from June-July of 1984 and we came back in early September, Labour Day weekend of 1986."

"I was one of the wives who would host cocktail parties and certain func-



Above: Cindy Carter has been making miniatures for around 60 years. Each project can take anywhere from weeks or months to finish. Below: JULIA SACCO

tions with the ambassador and diplomatic dinners," she says.

Now, though, Carter cites some serious health issues as her reason for downsizing the collection.

"I'd rather do this now, so that I know it's going to a good home and it is going to be appreciated," she says.

In her time selling off select pieces, Carter has amassed a regular clientele.

One couple travels regularly from Brantford. "They have bought a bit of furniture. There's a box in there now with some stuff they've put away."

"She'll call and say, 'OK,

we're gonna come up this weekend,' and I'll tell them how much it's going to cost, because it's cash only," Carter says.

Don't let her plans to downsize fool you, though. This is not the end of Carter's miniature making.

"I meet with a lady in town once a week and we work on a project. We've reached a point now that neither of us has any more room, so everything we make, we donate!"

Anyone interested in purchasing some of Carter's pieces can reach her "the old-school way" on her landline at 905-468-5063.



Featuring her mother's watches, Cindy Carter's miniature clock store is one of her most sentimental projects. JULIA SACCO

NOTL's newest community garden **prepares to launch** next month

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

Lifepointe Bible Church is giving residents a chance to use their green thumbs in its new community garden.

The church, at 736 York Rd., west of St. Davids and will be home to 15 gardens starting May 13. This will include 10 raised beds and five counter-height beds.

"It gives people an opportunity to get outdoors but also to maybe meet some people that normally wouldn't," lead pastor Greg Alderton told The Lake Report.

There are still 11 garden beds available, he said.

The raised beds are three feet by 12 feet and the counter-height beds are four feet by eight feet.

The counter-height beds are great for seniors, people with disabilities or those who don't want to get on their hands and knees to garden, said Alderton.

There is a \$50 fee to cover start-up costs and watering. Lifepointe will provide the soil and gardening supplies.

"If people can't afford it, they're more than welcome to contact us and we'll work something out," he said.

"We don't want cost to be prohibitive," he added.

Alderton and a few church members came up

with the idea for a community garden.

"With the rising costs of groceries, and especially produce, we felt that this was one way we would help people in the community," he said.

"Lifepointe will also have its own garden to grow fresh produce, which will then be donated to the Newark Neighbours Food Bank and Thrift Shop," he added.

Gardeners who have reserved a garden bed can come and meet up on May 13, learn the rules and discover where everything.

Anyone interested in participating can call the church at 905-688-2525 or sign up online at Lifepointe.ca.



Lifepointe Bible Church will have a new community garden. It will open on May 15 will have 15 garden beds for residents to purchase. SOMER SLOBODIAN

Willowbank celebrates graduation of **class of 2023**

John Scott
Special to The Lake Report

Sunlight streamed into Bright Parlour in the mansion at the Willowbank Estate on Thursday, April 6, heralding a special afternoon as a full audience witnessed the graduation of the Willowbank School of Restoration Arts class of 2023.

The significance of the Queenston-based school and convocation was underscored by the presence and words of several key individuals holding an interest in heritage conservation.

This included a moving welcome by Indigenous knowledge helper Marie Louise, an impressive perspective from Deputy Lord Mayor Erwin Wiens, the valued thoughts of heritage building conservationist and convocation speaker Philip Hoad and the moving comments of valedictorian MacKenzie Campbell.

It was clear that each speaker had carefully considered and then honed their remarks to provide impact, encouragement



Willowbank's 2023 grads, from left, Joshua Chan, Rémy Bles, Dawn Chan, Sean Blank, Johanna Keus and valedictorian Mackenzie Campbell. SUPPLIED

and opportunity to the six graduates as well as all Willowbank students who were able to attend.

Earlier in the day the six students had each presented their perspective of their time at Willowbank and their accomplishments during their third-year placement.

The students, guests and board members in attendance garnered knowledge of the skills these Willowbank students had acquired and then applied to their work experience.

But most particularly, the audience learned how close the members of this class had become.

Campbell emphasized this during her valedictory address, citing the fact that this group had enrolled in the COVID era and due to pandemic restrictions some courses were on-site and others were a hybrid mix.

She underscored how this had led the class to be

extremely cohesive and enabled them to learn as much as possible during their tenure through mutually respected debate and discussion.

On behalf of the class she offered appreciation to the Willowbank instructors, administration and greater community for the invaluable learning experience and the forging of long-term relationships.

Hoad offered significant advice and his thoughts on the progress of the graduates over three challenging years.

He emphasized the value of their learning and the opportunities it would afford for future careers as well as the benefit for the heritage conservation sector.

He sent a strong, clear message on the continued need for a learning forum such as Willowbank and his comments were met with enthusiastic agreement by the audience.

Wiens' presentation could only be offered by someone who had grown up in the area and even sledged on the Willowbank hill as a youth.

His upbeat and infectious delivery suggested a true commitment to the importance of heritage conservation in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

He suggested that perhaps some mutually beneficial opportunities in heritage planning could be explored between Willowbank and the town.

The graduates – Sean Blank, Rémy Bles, Joshua Chan, Dawn Chan, Johanna Keus and Campbell – were individually introduced and given their Willowbank diplomas in heritage conservation by Katie Houghton, director of the School of Restoration Arts.

The smiles on the faces of each graduate were a clear harbinger of the value each will bring to their careers in heritage conservation.

Willowbank, an internationally acclaimed, not-for-profit, private career college has been on the vanguard of heritage restoration, conservation and the adaptive reuse of existing buildings since 2006. King Charles III is the school's patron.

John Scott is chair of the board of the Willowbank.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE

What: Character Study for Randwood Estate and John Street East

When: Thursday, April 27, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Where: Electronically via the directions below

The Town is undertaking a Character Study for the Randwood Estate and John Street East area (the "Study"). The purpose of the Study is to define the character of the area and identify appropriate policies, regulations, and design criteria to guide future development.

The objectives of the Study are:

1. Establish a planning framework that protects existing cultural and natural heritage features, as well as agricultural lands;
2. Establish land use and cultural heritage policies and other design guidance for potential development within the study area; and,
3. Define and recommend any additional implementation mechanism(s) or tools to address the area character.

The subject area includes the land bound by the Heritage Trail, Charlotte Street, John Street East and in proximity to the urban area boundary in Old Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, as shown in the map below.

Phase 1 of the Study, including background review, area assessment and preliminary principles, is now nearing completion by the Town's consultants.

The purpose of this Public Information Centre is to present this information and receive feedback from the public. This input will help to inform the next steps of the Study, including the development of Official Plan policies and zoning regulations.

Dialogue is encouraged:

You are invited to attend the Public Information Centre to gather information and provide input regarding this matter.

If you wish to participate, you must register in advance with Shannon Mista, Community and Development Services, at shannon.mista@notl.com or 905-468-3266 ext. 315. Please register as soon as possible but prior to 12 noon on Thursday, April 27, 2023. You will receive an email on the date of the meeting with instructions to connect on your computer, tablet or telephone.

If you wish to view the meeting for information purposes, registration is not



required. The meeting will be livestreamed and available for viewing at the following link: <https://www.notl.com/council-government/mayor-council/meetings-agendas-minutes>

The meeting will also be recorded and posted following the session. Written comments are also encouraged and can be submitted via the contact above, at 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, P.O. Box 100, Virgil, ON L0S 1T0 or via email. Unless indicated otherwise, all submissions, including personal information, will become part of the public record.

For more information:

Information on the Study may be obtained on the Town's website at <https://www.notl.com/node/3011> or at the Community and Development Services Department within Town Hall.

The Town also invites you to get in touch at any time if you have any questions or comments about the Study. Please contact Kirsten McCauley, Director of Community and Development Services, by phone at 905-468-3266 ext. 243 or by email at Kirsten.McCauley@notl.com.



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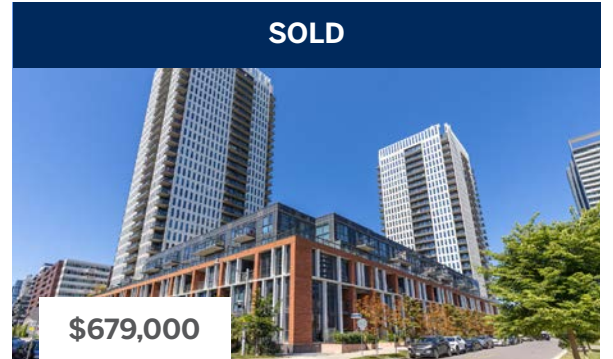
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EXPLORING PHOTOS WITH NOTL MUSEUM



Transportation in NOTL solved

We can often look to history to help understand the world we are living in or perhaps to help solve the problems of today. While digging through our photographic collection, we have found the solution to all the parking problems in town: A horse-drawn omnibus. This photograph shows a horse-drawn carriage on Queen Street in the Old Town district. There were a few carriage companies in town around the turn of the century and unfortunately, we can't confirm which one is responsible for the carriage featured here. We are, of course, kidding about solving the town's parking problems but perhaps there's something to it?

Niagara College hosts 8th annual BioBlitz this Saturday

Katie Ryan Special to The Lake Report

Niagara College is hosting its eighth annual spring BioBlitz on Saturday, a chance for the Niagara-on-the-Lake community to learn about different native species.

The blitz will be at the college's NOTL campus from 6 a.m. until 4 p.m. and participants can drop in any time all day.

The BioBlitz is a chance to explore different activities and learn from science experts about different creatures living in our community.

Participants will be able to identify different native species such as mammals, plants, birds, bugs and amphibians.

Volunteers will be able to create an overall goal of how researchers and the local community can monitor biodiversity for the future.

Taryn Wilkinson, manager of sustainability at Niagara College, said in a

news release that she's looking forward to welcoming people to the living lab.

"Our campus is a place to explore and learn sustainability and the environment. Citizens are needed now more than ever as climate change and pollution affects habitats and species across Niagara," she said.

There will be bird and insect hikes, a campfire with the Indigenous education program, and a community-wide clean up with Home Depot St. Catharines.

H&M St. Catharines will be collecting garments for its textile recycling program.

Participants can attend any of the activities throughout the day and lunch will be provided for anyone who registers.

Admission to the BioBlitz is free but registration is encouraged. No pets are allowed so they don't disturb any wild creatures.

For registration and full details, go to niagaracollege.ca/sustainability/students/bioblitz.



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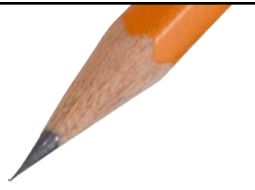
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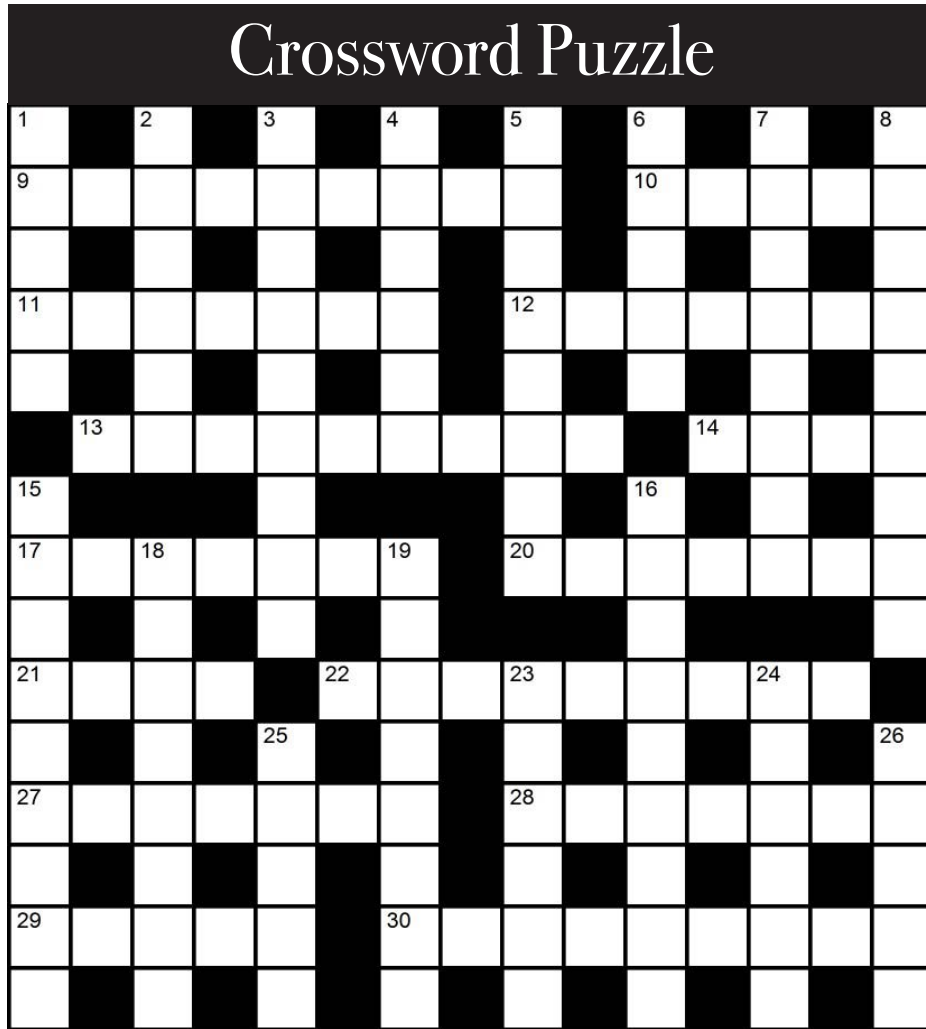
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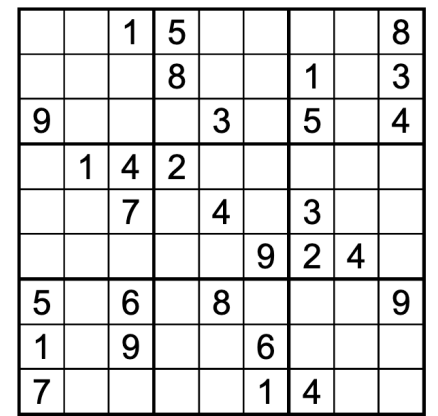
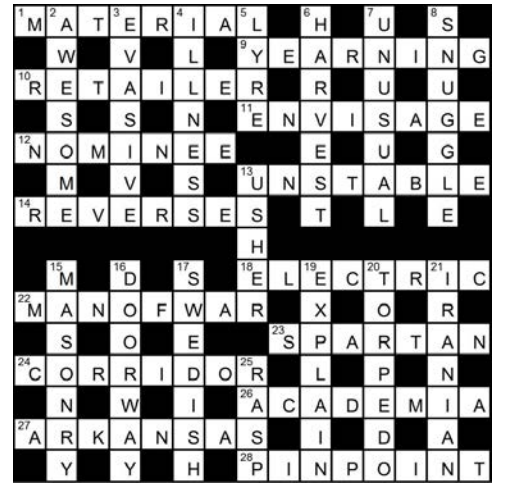
Have some fun



- Across**
- 9. Strangle (9)
 - 10. "Steady State" astronomer Sir Fred --- (5)
 - 11. Creatures (7)
 - 12. Senior Australian politician (7)
 - 13. Deliberate destruction of property (9)
 - 14. Career golfers (4)
 - 17. Six legged creatures (7)
 - 20. Superficial area (7)
 - 21. Short death notice (4)
 - 22. Not here (9)
 - 27. Makes sorrowful (7)
 - 28. Regulate (7)
 - 29. Essentials (5)
 - 30. Genuine (9)
- Down**
- 1. Dam across the Nile (5)
 - 2. Second-largest continent (6)
 - 3. Timidity (9)
 - 4. Maiden (6)
 - 5. Continues obstinately (8)
 - 6. Ring (5)
 - 7. Emotional outburst (8)
 - 8. Downcast (9)
 - 15. Luxurious car (9)
 - 16. Northern Russian city (9)
 - 18. Superficial (4-4)
 - 19. Rep (8)
 - 23. Stir to action (6)
 - 24. Something unusual (6)
 - 25. Animal (5)
 - 26. Absence of light (5)



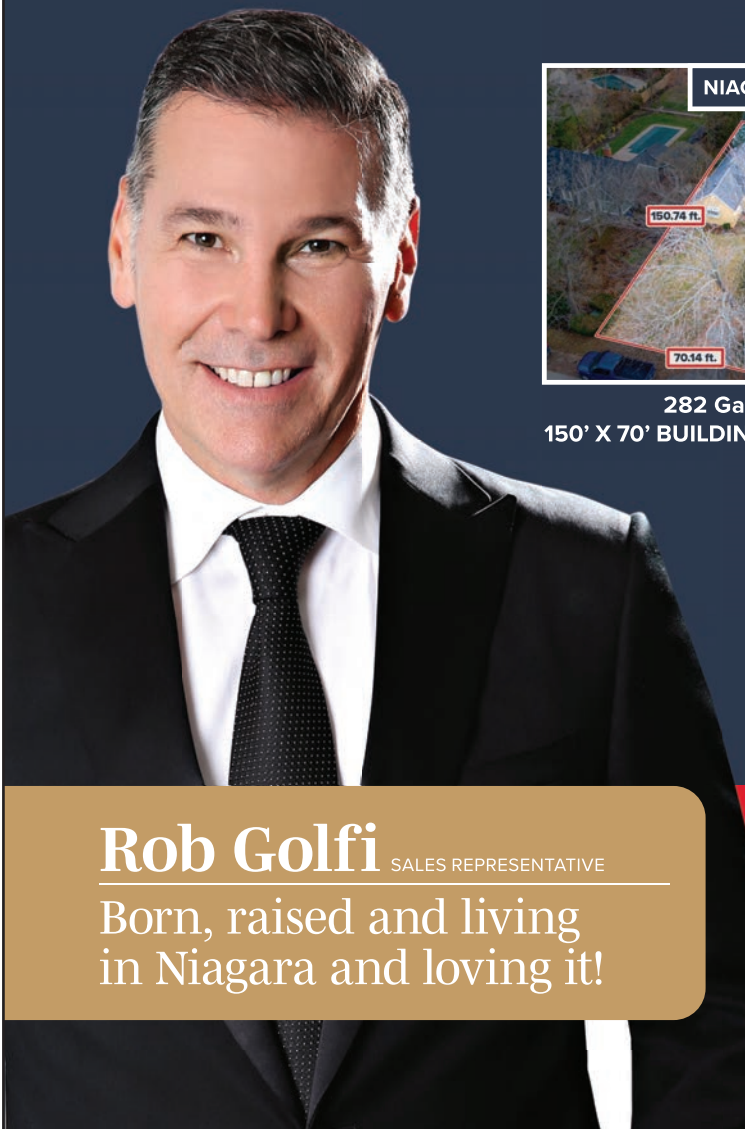
Last issue's answers



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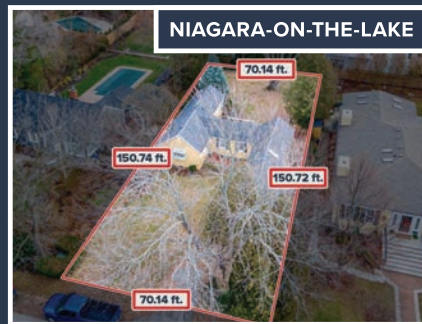
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Moments of grace when a loved one lives with dementia



DR. BROWN

Dr. William Brown
Special to The Lake Report

On a recent Sunday following the 8:30 a.m. service at St. Mark's, I visited my wife Jan at Pleasant Manor Radiant Care in Virgil.

After the usual COVID test, I passed Jan's room and picked up one of her favourite stuffed animals. We call him George.

A white furry stuffed rabbit with long floppy ears, a small bun for a tail and a cheery pink nose, George is easy to cuddle.

Jan is in long-term care for dementia: she spent her first three years in Niagara Long-Term Care in NOTL, and for the last six months, she has been at Pleasant Manor.

Over that time her dementia slowly progressed. These days Jan lives very

much in the moment, with little memory of her past, although prompted by me, sometimes old memories unexpectedly and briefly flash back.

Going forward, she has no awareness of the future or indeed the next few minutes.

Living in the present, Jan is good company. She has always been a sunny, cheerful person, much like her father before her. That disposition hasn't changed, although sometimes she's a little irritable, especially when she doesn't understand what's going on.

This particular morning was no different than most visits. When I visited, she was watching a sitcom out of the 1960s while most of her fellow residents sat with their chins on their chest, paying no attention.

I pulled a chair up and as usual Jan's eyes lit up and she smiled as if I had never left her the day before.

I handed George to her to hold and began to make up stories about him – what he had been up to that morning or was about to do, with the odd comment about his



Dr. Brown's wife Jan.

floppy ears, all of which Jan enjoys, even adding her own quips about George, which made both of us laugh.

Then a resident on Jan's other side reached out to stroke George's ears. A moment later both women were stroking and playing with George and Jan began to chat to her.

In no time the two women joined hands while sharing George. When I left a half-hour later, they were still joined by George and their hands.

That may not strike readers as unusual but from my observations, friendships, or any meaningful sustaining relationship between residents is unusual, especially in the later stages of dementia when many have

lost their social skills and interest.

Despite being surrounded by others at meals and for most activities, residents seem to pay little attention to others seated at the same table.

That social isolation makes matters worse because language skills atrophy, partly because the speech areas may be directly involved in some dementias but also because patients lack the initiative and interest in talking to one another enough to maintain their natural speech skills.

Known by her friends as an outgoing person before the onset of her dementia 10 years ago, Jan, like most demented residents, became quieter, until at the present time she usually talks only when directly spoken to and then only for a phrase or two.

That's why the little encounter was so special to the two women and to me – it was something I hadn't seen Jan do for many months: She shared something she liked to cuddle with someone else, held

their hand and talked to them.

It illustrates that the capacity to share something of value with someone else, remains. From the look on both their faces, both women enjoyed what may have been their first contact in many months.

Unfortunately, dementias associated with neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease or vascular dementia, progress and those affected lose much of their cognitive, emotional and speech skills.

This leaves them isolated from others with diminishing tools to change the situation, yet lonely for lack of warmth and affection.

Providing warmth, affection and, especially, a hug sometimes works wonders for those residents who are isolated because of their disease or in the case of the worst of COVID, when on and off from 2020 to 2022, many residents were isolated in their rooms with no understanding of why.

Long-term care is all about meeting the emotional and physical needs of residents. That's why

working in long-term care with dementia patients is so demanding, with no prospect that their charges will improve in the future. COVID made what was already a difficult job far more challenging.

Keeping well-trained staff became and remains a major issue as is the fact that those working in long-term care receive little thanks, because their work remains out of sight of the public, management and government.

For Jan and other residents of whom I'm aware, the care at Niagara Long-Term Care and Pleasant Manor has been exemplary. I'm very grateful to the staff at both institutions for their continuing commitment and sense of vocation in trying times.

And as I was reminded a few days ago, moments of grace do happen in the most extraordinary places.

Dr. William Brown is a professor of neurology at McMaster University and co-founder of the InfoHealth series at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library.

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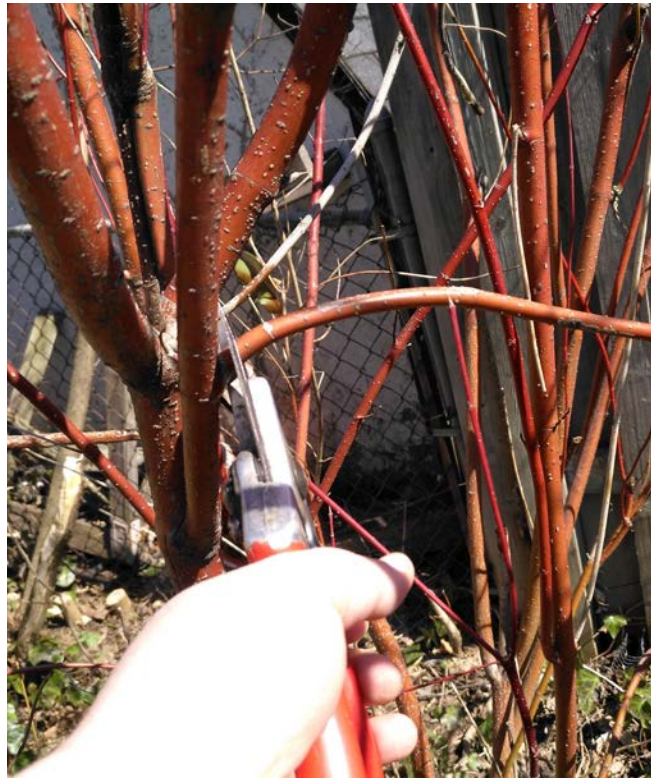
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Joanne Young says to prune out crossing branches (left) and one-third of the oldest growth (right) from your shrubs.

Pruning deciduous shrubs to be a cut above the rest



GROWING TOGETHER

Joanne Young
Columnist

To help understand pruning a bit better, last week we looked at some of the science about how a plant grows.

This week, here are some tips on pruning deciduous shrubs.

In general, the best time to prune any deciduous woody plant is just before the new growth starts in spring (the late dormant period from March to mid-April).

Pruning at other times can rob the plant of stored food and energy. It may also mean a loss of flowers or fruit. With that said, all rules have some exceptions. Here are those exceptions:

Any early spring flowering plants (plants that bloom off old wood) should be pruned immediately after flowering and before leaves unfold. Some examples of these plants are magnolia, forsythia, wisteria, serviceberry, lilac, quince, bridal wreath spirea, most Viburnums.

Trees such as maples (including Japanese maples), flowering Dogwoods, birch and elm will bleed if pruned in late winter or early spring. A better time to prune these trees would be mid-summer.

Let's be honest: how many of your shrubs have the same shape after you have pruned them? Chances are once the plants have been in your garden for a couple years, they all start looking the same.

When pruning deciduous trees and shrubs, many people will just shear back the top of the plant to reduce its overall height, but this is only one part of proper pruning techniques. Here are some steps to follow.

Step 1. When pruning any shrub or tree, always start out with the 3 Ds of pruning. That means you prune out any dead, diseased or damaged branches first.

Step 2. Next, remove any branches that closely cross with other branches or that cross through the middle of the plant. You want to have branches that come from the centre of the plant and head outward.

Step 3. When pruning any plant, it is always good to know what your goal is and that will help you determine how to best prune your shrub. There are four main goals of pruning that you should consider before you begin:

Control plant size: The best way to do this is by

natural pruning which means making selective cuts to thin or reduce the overall size of the plant.

You are not just shearing off the tips but removing branches using secateurs or loppers. When you only shear back the tips, your shrubs will become very wide at the top because of this increased branching, giving it an ice cream cone-like appearance.

When the top is so wide, it stops the sunlight from hitting the base of the plant and you are left with a plant that is bare at the base. When pruning is completed, the plant should still have its natural form.

Increase quantity of flowers and fruit: Proper pruning will aid in the production of flowers.

Most flowers are produced on the tips of the stems, so the more tips there are, the more flowers you have and the more fruit that will be produced.

To accomplish, cut back the stem tips, stimulating the side branches and developing more tips for the flowers to form on. Just remember, the more flowers a plant produces the smaller the flowers will be.

Maintain a certain shape: One of the goals of pruning might be to maintain a certain shape, such as a hedge, a globe form, or specimen plants like spirals and pompons.

This is best achieved by shearing. With shearing you

just remove new tip growth, creating a full dense look. Even though electric shears make the job easier, hand shears do a much nicer job of things.

Electric shears tear the plant tissue while hand shears make a cleaner cut. When the plant tissue is torn there is more die back at the tips, giving the sheared shrub a brownish tinge.

Prevent this by making any pruning tool is sharp and clean before using it.
Rejuvenate an older shrub: We tend to let shrubs grow year after year and once they become too large, we hack (not a proper horticultural term) them back, hoping they will survive and become beautiful again.

It is much easier to do a bit of pruning every year than to wait until the shrub is out of control. The best way to rejuvenate an old flowering shrub is to do so over a three-year period.

This can be achieved by removing one-third of the oldest growth every year right back to the base. That will stimulate growth from lower down. In three years, you will have completely rejuvenated the shrub.

Keep these tips and goals in mind as you tackle your garden this spring and you will be a cut above the rest.

Joanne Young is a Niagara-on-the-Lake garden expert and coach. See her website at joanneyoung.ca.

Obituary

Herbert Finlay Foster



May 14, 1936—March 30, 2023

Manhattan & Sag Harbor, New York

Herbert (Herb) Foster was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba and grew up in Vancouver, BC. He was focused on acting and the theater from an early age. Over his 50-year career, he has appeared in 21 Broadway shows (both plays and musicals,) 35 off Broadway shows as well

as 85 shows at various regional theaters in both Canada and the United States. He has appeared on television and on film. He was a leading player at The Shaw Festival in Ontario for 10 years and at one point he held the record for the most appearances at the Delacorte Theater in Central Park in Manhattan. His clarity of speech and his gift for phrasing made him a favorite for the classics, especially Shakespeare and Shaw.

He was known and loved not only for his talent but also for his rugged good looks, his piercing blue eyes and his charming, unpretentious manner. He is survived by his devoted husband Brian Meister in Manhattan and Sag Harbor, his two sisters Lorraine Swaile and Dorothy Martin, his brother Brian Foster all in Vancouver as well as nieces, nephews and cousins. He was predeceased by his brother Douglas Foster in 2020.

Lions food drive helps keep food on tables



The Niagara Lions were out collecting food donations Saturday at both Independent stores in town. Between the two stores they were able to drop off two truckloads of food to Newark Neighbours food bank, said Lion Dorothy Soo-Wiens. SUPPLIED

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